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THE
HISTORY
OF
ANCIENT GREECE,

ITS COLONIES, AND CONQUESTS;

FROM THE EARLIEST ACCOUNTS TILL THE DIVISION OF THE MACEDONIAN
EMPIRE IN THE EAST.

INCLUDING THE HISTORY OF
LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND THE FINE ARTS.

174-1836
BY JOHN GILLIES, LL. D.

*F. R. S. and A. S. London, F. R. S. Edinburgh, and Historiographer to his
Majesty for Scotland.*

Εκ μὲν τοῦτε τῆς ἀπαντῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλα συμπλοκῆς καὶ παραθεσιῶς, ἐπὶ δε
ὁμοιοτήτος καὶ διαφορᾶς, μόνως αὖ τις ἐφίκοιτο καὶ δυνήθει κατεσπένεσθαι,
ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ χρησίμῳ καὶ τὸ τέρπνον ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας λαβεῖν.

POLYBIUS, l. i. c. v.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE following History commences with the infancy of Greece, and describes its gradual advancement towards civilization and power. But the main design of my work is confined to the space of seven centuries, which elapsed from the settlement of the Ionians in Asia Minor, till the establishment of the Macedonian empire in the East; during which memorable period, the arts and arms of the Greeks, conspiring to excite the admiration and terror of the ancient world, justly merit the attentive study of the present age, and posterity. In the general revolutions of their national confederacy, which, though always loose and imperfect, was never altogether dissolved, I have interwoven the description and principal transactions of each independent republic, however small or inconsiderable: and, by comparing authors seldom read, and not frequently consulted for historical materials, have endeavoured to trace the intricate series, and to explain the secret connexion, of seemingly detached events, in order to reduce the scattered members of Grecian story into one perpetual unbroken narrative; a design difficult indeed, and new, yet evidently well calculated to promote the great purposes of pleasure and utility.

In the view which I have taken of my subject, the fluctuation of public affairs, and the vicissitudes of war

VOL. I.

and fortune, appear scarcely the most splendid, and surely not the most interesting portion of Grecian history. By genius and fancy, not less than by patriotism and prowess, the Greeks are honourably distinguished among the nations of the earth. By the Greeks, and by them alone, Literature, Philosophy, and the Fine Arts, were treated as important concerns of state, and employed as powerful engines of policy. From their literary glory, not only their civil, but even their military transactions, derive their chief importance and dignity. To complete, therefore my present undertaking, it seemed necessary to unite the history of arts with that of empire, and to combine with the external revolutions of war and government, the intellectual improvements of men, and the ever-varying picture of human opinions and manners.

In the execution of this extensive plan, might I assume any merit to myself, it would be that of having diligently studied the Greek writers, without adopting their prejudices, or copying their narratives with servility. Many events, highly interesting to the citizens of Athens or of Sparta now interest no more; concerning many important transactions, anciently too familiar to be explained, the modern reader will reasonably expect information. On some occasions, therefore, I found it necessary to concentrate and abridge; on others to dilate and expatiate; but have never sacrificed that due relation of parts to the whole, and to each other, or violated that unity of design which I was ambitious to attain in the present History, by condescending to copy or translate. In the Work throughout, I have ventured to think for myself; and my opinions, whether well or ill founded, are, at least, my own.

The present History was undertaken, and a considerable part of it written, many years ago, by the advice of some persons of taste and learning, who, having read my historical introduction to the *Orations of Lysias and Isocrates*, wished to see the whole series of Grecian story treated on the same plan. My situation, and my leisure, enabled me to meet their wish; but before my manuscript was prepared for the Press, my studies were interrupted by the only employment, not enjoined by some positive duty, which I should have *allowed* (such are the sanguine hopes of authors!) to suspend my literary labours. During that long interval, different portions of Grecian history have been ably treated in English, as well as in * foreign languages. Yet, as most of those works still remain incomplete, and as none of them embrace the whole extent of my subject, or at all pre-occupy my plan, I venture to offer the present History, deeply sensible as I am of its imperfections, to the indulgence of the Public.

* Among the foreign works, I distinguish with pleasure those of Mr. Meiners of Gottingen. To the author of this History it would be very flattering to find the opinions which he hazarded in his introduction to *Lysias*, confirmed in a subsequent work of such a respectable scholar as Mr. Meiners (see his *Geschichte des Luxus der Athenienser*, Lemgo 1782,) were it not extremely natural that writers, who draw from the same sources, should advance the same facts, and deduce similar conclusions. In the following History, my views of the *Pythagorean band*, and of the *Platonic philosophy*, though sufficiently remote from vulgar opinion, nearly coincide with those of Mr. Meiners in his *Geschichte des Ursprungs, Fortgangs, and Verfalls der Wissenschaften in Griechenland*; that is, "the History of the Origin, Progress, and Decay of Philosophy in Greece:" a work not yet completed, but which, as far as it extends, I will venture to recommend as one of the most valuable and accurate treasures of Greek learning contained in any modern tongue.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
ANCIENT GREECE.

CHAP. I.

*View of the Progress of Civilization and Power in Greece,
preceding the Trojan War.—History of that War.—Its Con-
sequences.*

IN the infancy of society, men are occupied with the business of the present hour, forgetful of the past, and careless of the future. They have neither ability nor inclination to contemplate their public transactions in the impartial light of history, far less to treasure and to record them. Their recent victories over hostile tribes are celebrated in the artless song,* or commemorated by the rude monument; but to preserve any regular series of connected events, is a design, which they enjoy not the means to execute, scarcely the capacity to comprehend.

Introduc-
tion.

Their simple and obscure adventures, which thus pass unremembered by themselves, rarely excite the inquisitive curiosity of their more cultivated neighbours. In remote ages of the world, one people became an object of attention to another, only as they became considerable; for, until the full maturity

* Tacit. Annal. l. iv. c. 43.

of Grecian refinement, the most polished nations of antiquity attempted not to investigate the nature and powers of man in the untutored efforts of savage life. The daring spirit, and fierce incursions, of the Barbarians in the east of Europe, excited terror and consternation among the more civilized and more effeminate inhabitants of Lesser Asia;* but the luxurious pride of the latter never condescended to examine the origin and history of the people who were occasionally the object of their fears. The only circumstantial information concerning both the Asiatics and the Europeans, must be derived from the early historians of Greece; and when we reflect on the innumerable causes which conspire to bury in oblivion the exploits of rising communities, there is reason to wonder that we should know so much concerning the ancient state of that country, rather than to regret that our knowledge is imperfect.

It must be allowed, however, that our materials for the first portion of Grecian history, are rather copious than consistent.†

* The Lydians, Phrygians, &c. History and Fable attest the early civilization, the wealth, and wickedness, of those nations. See particularly Herodotus, l. i. c. 93 & seq. and Strabo, l. xi. p. 532. & seq. and l. xii. and xiii. p. 572.

† It is sufficient to read Thucydides' introduction to his admired history of the Peloponnesian war, to perceive how little correct information could be obtained by that diligent inquirer into the antiquities of his country. If we admit the common chronology, there is reason to believe that the scattered fragments of Grecian history were preserved, during thirteen centuries by oral tradition. The tales or rhapsodies of the *αοιδοι*, or bards, were succeeded by those of the Cyclic poets, of whom an account is given in Casaubon ad Athenæum, l. vii. c. 4. Salmas. in Solin. & Schwarzzius Aldtdorf in Diss. de Poetis Cyclicis. Composition in prose began with the use of alphabetic writing about six centuries before Christ. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. v. c. 29. The first prose writers, or more properly the first *writers* were, Phercydes of Syros; Acusilaus of Argos; Hellanicus of Lesbos; Hecataeus, and Dionysius, both of Miletus; the last of whom flourished in the 65th Olymp. 520 B. C. and immediately preceded Herodotus. From the work of Herodotus, which forms, as it were, the shade between Epic Poetry and History, we may judge of the writings of his predecessors; from whom, and from the Cyclic poets, Anaximenes of Lampsacus, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great, and Diodorus Siculus, who lived in the time of Julius Cæsar, compiled the first books of their very extensive but inaccurate collections. Apollodorus, Hyginus, (and many others, whose works are now lost,) combined the more ancient records, whether in prose or verse, with the additions and embellishments of the lyric and tragic Poets.

The subject, indeed, is such, as a very cautious writer would choose entirely to avoid, since, whatever authorities he follows, his narrative must, in some parts be liable to objection.* Yet, it seems essential to the integrity of the present work, to explain from what assemblage of nations the Greeks were formed, and by what fortunate steps they arrived, from feeble beginnings, to that condition of manners and society in which they are described by Homer; whose immortal poems, a meteor in the gloom of night, brighten, for a moment, the obscure antiquities of his country.

The traditions of the Greeks agree with the authentic records of sacred history, in representing the countries afterwards known by the names of First inhabitants of Greece.

When the Greek learning became known to the Romans, this compound of history and fable furnished the subject and the incidents of innumerable tragedies to Ennius, Accius, Livius Andronicus, &c. After the downfall of Rome, learning took refuge in the eastern world. The antiquities and early history of Greece again became objects of study among the natives of that country; but the heterogeneous mass of truth and fiction was rather amalgamated, than purified, by Malala, Cedrenus, Tzetza, Constantinus Menasses, and other Greeks of the middle ages. See Heine, Not. ad Æneid. II. and Vossius de Historic. Græcis. With few exceptions, the Greek writers may be pronounced extremely careless in matters of chronology. Herodotus, who has been emphatically styled the father of profane history, commonly reckons by the ages of men. The accurate histories of Thucydides and Xenophon, where the time of each event is precisely ascertained, comprehend no more than a period of seventy years. Even in their time chronology seems not to have been cultivated as a science, since the first specimen of that kind is said to have been given by Demetrius Phalereus, in his *αρχοντων αναγραφη*; about the middle of the fourth century before Christ. The labours of Demetrius were corrected and extended by Philocorus in his *Αρθις*. The historian Timæus, who flourished in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, first arranged his narrative in the order of Olympiads, which began 776 B. C. His cotemporary Sosibius gave a work, intitled *χρονων αναγραφη*; Apollodorus wrote the *συνοταξις χρονικη* and on such chronologers rests the credit of all later compilers, as well as of the Arundelian marbles, which were composed only 264 years before Christ.

* What Strabo (l. ix.) says of the first historians of Attica, “that they differed widely from each other (*πολλα διαφωνουντες*),” may be applied to all profane histories of those early times.

Thrace, Macedon, and Greece, as peopled at an earlier period than any other portion of the western world. The southern corner of Europe, comprehended between the thirty-sixth and forty-first degrees of latitude, bordering on Epirus and Macedonia towards the north, and on other sides surrounded by the sea, was inhabited, above eighteen centuries before the Christian æra, by many small tribes of hunters and shepherds,

among whom the Pelasgi and Hellenes were the most numerous and powerful.* The barbarous Pelasgi

venerated Inachus as their founder; and for a similar reason, the more humane Hellenes respected Deucalion. From his son Hellen, they derived their general appellation, which originally denoted a small tribe in Thessaly;† and from

Dorus, Eolus, and Ion,‡ his more remote descendants, they were discriminated by the names of Dorians, Eolians, and Ionians.¶ The Dorians took possession of that mountainous district of Greece, afterwards called Doris: the Ionians, whose name was gradually

lost in the more illustrious appellation of Athenians, settled in the less barren parts of Attica: and the Eolians peopled Elis and Arcadia, the western and inland regions of the Peloponnesus.§ Notwithstanding many partial emigrations, these three¶ original divisions of the Hellenes generally entertained an affection for the establishments which had been preferred by the wisdom or caprice of their respective ancestors; a circumstance which remarkably distinguished the *Hellenic* from the *Pelasgic* race. While the former discovered a degree of attachment to their native land, seldom found in barbarians who live by hunting or pasturage, the latter disdaining fixed habitations, wandered in large bodies over Greece, or transported themselves into the neighbouring islands; and the most considerable portion of them, gradually removing to the coasts of Italy and Thrace, the remainder melted away into the Doric

* Marm. Oxon. epoch. 6. Apollodor. Biblioth. l. ii.

† Thucyd. l. i. c. 28.

‡ Strabo, l. viii. p. 383.

¶ Herodot. l. i. c. 56. and l. vii. c. 94.

§ Diodor. Siculus, l. v.

¶ Heraclid. Pont. apud Athenæum, l. xiv.

and Ionic tribes. At the distance of twelve centuries, obscure traces of the Pelasgi occurred in several Grecian cities; a district of Thessaly always retained their name; their colonies continued, in the fifth century before Christ, to inhabit the southern coast of Italy, and the shores of the Hellespont: and, in those widely separated countries, their ancient affinity was recognized in the uniformity of their rude dialect and barbarous manners, extremely dissimilar to the customs and language of their Grecian neighbours.*

Greece, when delivered from the turbulence of a rugged race of men, who never attained much consideration, either in the territories where they originally dwelt, or in those to which they afterwards removed, was not left to be slowly civilized by the progressive ingenuity of the Hellenic tribes. The happy position of a country, which, forming as it were the frontier of Europe with Asia, is divided only by narrow seas from Egypt and Syria, and situate within reach of those parts of the East which were anciently most flourishing and populous, naturally invited the visits of travellers, and attracted the establishment of colonies. These transient visits, or temporary settlements, were marked by many signal benefits, the memory of which was long preserved by the gratitude of Greece, and their merit probably exaggerated by her fondness for panegyric. Even those Grecian communities, which justly claimed the honour of superior antiquity, acknowledged themselves indebted to strangers for the most important discoveries, not only in religion, but in agriculture, and the arts; and contented themselves with the glory of having diffused a borrowed light over the melancholy gloom of ignorance which overspread their neighbours.† But national vanity at length produced a material change in the tradition. When the refined descendants of the rude Greeks viewed with complacence their own superiority in arts and arms to all the nations around them, they began to suspect that the Gods alone were worthy to have reared the infancy of a people who

* Herodot. l. i. Dionys. Halicarn. l. i. Pausan. l. viii.

† Isocrat. Panegy. passim.

eminently excelled the rest of mankind. To the Gods they transferred the merit of the many useful inventions communicated by the generous humanity of their ancient visitants; an ostentatious fiction, coloured by a faint semblance of truth, since the worship of several divinities was introduced at the same time, and by the same persons,* who made known the arts most subservient to the purposes of human life.†

New colonies from the same Countries. While fable thus disguised the benefits conferred by the first transitory voyages into Greece, history preserved the memory of four permanent establishments, formed successively in that country by foreigners. From the middle of the sixteenth, to the middle of the fourteenth century before Christ, an inundation of Egyptians, Phenicians, and Phrygians overflowed the Hellenic coasts. The causes assigned for these emigrations are highly consonant to the manners of remote antiquity, as described by sacred and profane authors: hatred of a rival, impatience of a superior, in one instance the persecution of a brother and an enemy, and, in general, that uneasy restlessness of disposition, which universally prevails among men, who have become sensible of their own powers, without having sufficiently learned to direct them to the happy pursuits of arts and industry.‡ The principle colonies were conducted by Cecrops|| and Danaus, A. C. 1556. Egyptians, who respectively settled in Athens and 1485. Argos; Cadmus,§ a Phenician, who founded Thebes 1493. in Bœotia; and Pelops,¶ a Phrygian, whose descendants, intermarrying with those of Danaus, king of Argos, and Tyndareus, king of Lacedæmon or Sparta, acquired in the person of Agamemnon, so powerful an ascendant in the Peloponnesus.** The family of Deucalion still reigned in

* The Tytans, Idæi Dactyli, Triptolemus, &c. Compare Diodor. Sicul. l. v. and Isocrat. Panegyr.

† Diodor. Sicul. l. v. Isocrat. Panegyr.

‡ Isocrat. Hellen. sub initio. Pind. Olymp. 1.

|| Strabo, l. ix. and Plut. in Theseo. § Strabo, ibid. and Isocrat. Hellen.

¶ Isocrat. Panathen. Thucyd. l. i. Diodor. l. iv.

** Thucyd. l. i. Diodor. l. 4. Isocrat. Panathen.

Thessaly; but Thebes, Athens, Argos, and Sparta, which were long regarded as the principal cities of Greece, thus fell under the dominion of four foreign lines of princes, whose exploits, and glory, and misfortunes, are immortalized by the first and noblest productions of Grecian genius.*

The countries, which these adventurers abandoned, had not, according to modern ideas, attained a very high degree of maturity in laws and government. It cannot, however, be doubted, that the natives of Egypt and the East were acquainted with many improvements unknown to the Hellenic tribes. Conjectures are not to be placed in the rank of facts; yet, in matters so ancient and obscure, we may be allowed to conjecture from the only facts on record, that the invaders of Greece introduced into that country the knowledge of the Phenician alphabet; improved the practice of agriculture; multiplied the rites of religion; discovered to the Greeks several uses of the metals, but, on the other hand, gradually adopted, in their turn, the Grecian language, and generally conformed to the Grecian customs and institutions.†

The introduction of the Phenician alphabet was an improvement too delicate and refined to be immediately attended with any important consequences.

The gross understandings of the Hellenes could not easily comprehend the utility of such an ingenious invention. The knowledge of it was acquired and preserved by a few individuals‡ of

* The works of Homer and Pindar, and the writings of the Greek tragedians. In these, and scarcely any where else, the stories of Cadmus, Semele, Bacchus, Amphitryon, Hercules, Oedipus, &c. may be read with pleasure and advantage; for as Strabo, l. ix. says, "All there is monstrous and tragic land."

† Compare Herodotus, l. v. c. 59. l. vii. passim. Montfaucon, Palæograph. Græc. l. 2. Plin. l. v. c. 56 & 57. Hyginus, Fab. 274. and Ephorus apud Diodor. l. v.

‡ Herodotus mentions three inscriptions on three tripods, consecrated in the temple of Ismenian Apollo. The first of Amphitryon; the second, of the son of Hippocoon; the third, of Laodamus the son of Eteocles. The inscriptions on the shields of the heroes who besieged the capital of Eteocles, are noticed by Æschylus, in his tragedy entitled, "The Seven against Thebes." Yet we know from Homer, Iliad vi. that when Prætus sent Bellerophon to the King of Ly-

more enlightened minds : but the far greater part of the nation long contented themselves with the ancient mode of picture-writing, which, however limited in its application, seemed sufficient to express the simplicity of their rude ideas.

Several uses of the metals. The Phenicians were well acquainted with the precious metals as the medium of exchange. But the

uniform transactions of the Greeks, as yet required not any such nicety of refinement. Even during the Trojan war, cattle, being the commodity of most general demand, was universally regarded as the most convenient measure of value.* It is not easy to determine whether gold or iron be more advantageous to man, the one by exciting his industry, the other by seconding that industry in all the variety of useful arts. The

Extension of agriculture. discovery of iron in Greece afforded the necessary implements of agriculture, the gradual extension of which alike improved the sterility of the soil, and the

cia, he gave him, not a written letter, but *σηματα λυγα*, mournful signs. Writing could not be common till many centuries afterwards, since the first written laws were given in Greece only six centuries before Christ. Herodot. l. ii. Strabo, l. vi.

* In a well-known passage, Homer, after mentioning other articles with which the Greeks purchased wine, adds, *αυτοις βοσσει*, "with oxen themselves." Some scholiasts and commentators have imagined, that the *βους* of Homer was a coin stamped with the figure of an ox, said to have been introduced by Theseus. Vid. Plut. in Theseo. But were it allowed, which is very improbable, that Theseus had a mint, it would still be improbable that Homer meant such a coin, for, in the episode of Glaucus and Diomed, he says, that the former gave his golden armour, worth a hundred oxen, for the brazen armour of the latter, worth only nine. Now we know from Pollux Onomast. l. ix. c. 7. that the coin *βους*, at whatsoever time it was introduced, continued to be valued at two drachms. Diomed's arms, therefore, upon the supposition of the scholiasts, must have been worth about nine shillings; and Glaucus's, which were of massy gold, worth only nine pounds. Talents of gold are often mentioned by Homer. They were proposed as prizes to combatants, and offered as dedications in temples, but too valuable to serve as current specie. Homer and Herodot. passim. *Νομισμα*, money is derived from *νομος*, law, because, as Aristotle says, *ου φυσικη, αλλα νομικη εστι*, "the origin of money is not natural, but conventional and arbitrary." But in Homer's time, the word *νομος* was used in a quite different sense : *νομισμα* must therefore have been derived from it at a later period. Com. Iliad. l. xx. v. 249. and Aristot. Ethic. Nicom. l. v. c. 3.

rudeness of the inhabitants. Before the arrival of Egyptian colonies, the cultivation of the ground might occasionally employ the divided industry of scattered families; but this valuable art was not considered as an object of general concern. Cecrops first engaged the wandering hunters or shepherds of Attica to unite in villages of husbandmen. Corn, wine, and oil, rewarded their useful labours;* and these productions, being acquired by common toil, were regarded, with the ground itself, as a common property.†

The idea of an exclusive and permanent right to ^{Religious} all the uses of a piece of land, whether belonging to ^{rites.} communities or to individuals, is one of the most interesting steps in the progress of society. In Greece, this invaluable right was immediately followed by such institutions as tended to secure its enjoyment, and to check the injustice of man, who is seldom willing to acquire, by slow labour, what he can ravish by sudden violence. The salutary influence of religion was employed on this important occasion. We are told by several writers, that the practice of agriculture, and the rites of religion, were introduced at the same time.‡ But these authors also inform us, that their pretended founders of religious worship abolished the use of living sacrifices;|| a custom, which evidently supposes the prior establishment of an ancient and more bloody superstition. Yet in this humane prohibition, we may perhaps discern a laudable attempt to correct the barbarity of the Greeks, and to raise the new occupation of agriculture above the ancient employment of hunting.

Before and during the time that the Hellenic ^{The Hellenes diffuse their colonies and language over} tribes received continual accessions of population ^{Greece.} from distant countries, they were no less diligent in sending forth their own colonies. As they originally

* Pausan. l. 3. Æschyl. Eumen.

† The *τεμενος*, or *cut* of ground, so often mentioned in Homer, as bestowed by general consent on admired kings and chiefs, might have suggested this observation, which seems to have escaped notice, though attended, as we shall find, with very important consequences.

‡ Diodor. Pausan. Apollod.

|| Θεους καρποῖς ἀγαλλεῖν, ζωὰ μὴ σινεσθαι. Porph. de Abstinent. iv. 22.

subsisted by hunting, fishing and pasturage, a large extent of territory was requisite to supply them with the necessities of life. They were not afflicted by the oppressive terrors of despotism; they were long unacquainted with the gentle, but powerful operation of regular government; and without subjection to the one or the other, it is scarcely possible for men to live together in large societies. When any of their communities seemed inconveniently numerous, they divided it into several portions, of which the principal kept possession of their original seats, while the others occupied and peopled the surrounding territories. It was thus that the Eolians dispersed themselves through many parts of the Peloponnesus; the unfortunate Sisyphus,* who founded the city of Corinth, being a descendant of Eolus; and the ancestors of the wise Nestor, who reigned in sandy Pylos, being sprung from the same Eolic race†. A considerable division of the Ionians settled along the southern shores of the Corinthian gulf, in the province which, eighty years after the Trojan war, changed the name of Ionia for that of Achaia.‡ The territory beyond the Corinthian isthmus was parcelled out among innumerable subdivisions of the Hellenic tribes.¶ When the continent of Greece seemed sufficiently populous, the Athenians gave inhabitants to the isle of Eubœa; and, many centuries before the famous establishments formed by the Greeks on the coasts of Asia Minor, of Italy, and of Thrace, the Dorians had sent a colony to Crete,§ and the Eolians, under the conduct of Dardanus, had planted the eastern banks of the Hellespont.¶ During the Trojan war, the inhabitants of those various and widely separated countries used the same language spoken by the Hellenes, and acknowledged the general influence of the same principles and manners. Unless it is supposed, therefore, that not only the Phrygians, but the Phenicians and Egyptians, originally spoke the same Hellenic tongue, it seems reasonable to conjecture, that the colonies conducted by

* Καὶ Σίσυφον εἰσίδειν πατέρα αἰγέα έχοντα. Homer. Odyss.

† Pausan. in Corinthet. Messen.

‡ Strabo, l. vii.

¶ Id. ibid. Pausan. and Diodor.

§ Diodor. ibid. Strabo, l. vii. p. 496.

¶ Servius in Æneid. III.

Cecrops, Cadmus and Danaus, gradually adopted the language of the aborigines of Greece.*

A single reflection appears sufficient to prove, that they likewise conformed to the Grecian institutions of government. The inflexible rigour of despotism, which has in all ages prevailed in Egypt† and the East, was unknown to the conquerors of Troy. Since the absolute power of kings was not acknowledged during a period of war and danger, requiring the strictest military subordination; and, since the Greeks preserved their freedom, after the increasing wealth of many centuries had a tendency to prepare them for servitude; it cannot reasonably be supposed, that an Oriental system of oppression should have prevailed in the more early ages of poverty and independence.‡

The Phenicians being considered as the principal navigators and merchants of the ancient world, it is commonly believed that the example of the Phenician

Institutions
of govern-
ment of the
Hellenes.

Happy sit-
uation of
Greece for
commerce.

* Herodotus, l. v. c. 58. says, that the colony of Cadmus changed their speech, being surrounded by the Ionians, an Hellenic tribe. He says further, that, together with their language, they changed the power of some of their letters. He acknowledges that the Cadmeians, or Phenicians, communicated to the Ionians the use of letters; but the Ionians, he says, adapted the Phenician alphabet to the sounds of their own language. The eastern tongues are in general extremely deficient in vowels. It is, or rather was, much disputed, whether the ancient Orientals used any characters to express them. Their languages, therefore, must have had an inflexible thickness of sound, extremely different from the vocal harmony of the Greek, which abounds not only in vowels but in diphthongs. This circumstance denotes, in the Greeks, organs of perception more acute, elegant, and discerning. They felt such faint variations of liquid sounds, as escaped the dulness of Asiatic ears, and invented marks to express them. They distinguished, in this manner, not only their articulation, but their quantity, and afterwards their musical intonation, as shall be explained hereafter, in treating of the Grecian music and poetry.

† The government of the Egyptians, as well as of the Asiatics, is uniformly represented in Scripture as an absolute monarchy. Herodotus and Diodorus mention some laws of the Egyptians, which seem to circumscribe the power of their kings. But these laws, if well examined, will confirm the observation in the text. They were established, not in favour of the nation at large, but of the priests and soldiers. The throne of Egypt was supported by the altar, and defended by the sword; and what despotism can be upheld but by the same means?

‡ See the principles established by Tacitus de Mor. German.

colonies first taught the Greeks to brave the dangers of the sea, and to maintain a commercial intercourse with each other, as well as with foreign nations. But it is sufficient to throw a glance on the geography of Greece, to perceive how naturally commerce, without foreign aid, might have arisen spontaneously in that highly-favoured country. The continent, *itself*, washed on three sides by the sea, is surrounded by innumerable islands, abounding in excellent harbours. The variety of soils and productions is greater, perhaps, than in any other part of the world, of an equal extent. All the shores of the Mediterranean, comprehending the most beautiful, and anciently, the most flourishing part of the earth, are more accessible to Greece than to any neighbouring country. Yet, it appears from the light of history, that the Greeks did not early avail themselves of their fortunate situation, or of the supposed lessons of their Phenician instructors.

Circumstances which retarded the progress of society in Greece. Face of the country.

Many circumstances conspired to prolong the infancy of their nation, and to retard, during several centuries, their improvement in commerce, as well as in agriculture, and the other useful arts. The surface of Greece is more indented by creeks and rivers, and more roughened by mountains and promontories, than that of any other part of Europe. These natural divisions kept the different communities in a state of separation and hostility. The ideas of their ancient consanguinity and common origin were weakened or effaced by the perpetual conflux of foreigners. They could not travel beyond their own narrow districts without being exposed to the insults of enemies. These insults excited resentment; mutual injuries were offered and retorted; each city was at war with its neighbours: and the *smallness* of the Grecian states, a circumstance which, during the happy ages that form the subject of the present history, tended to break the force of custom and opinion, and to encourage that noble emulation so favourable to the progress of virtue and science, thus produced, in less fortunate times, an effect of the most opposite nature, choked the seeds of order, and repressed the feeble shoots of arts and humanity.

Smallness of the different states.

The metals, originally destined to promote the peaceful labours of man, were converted into powerful instruments of destruction; and while the land was ravaged by the sword, the sea was covered with pirates. The Phenicians, the Carians, and the inhabitants of the Greek islands in general, considered navigation, not as the means of uniting nations by mutual intercourse and commerce, but as a happy expedient for enabling the poor and the brave to plunder the rich territories of their less warlike neighbours. The coasts of Greece, though in early times their bleak forbidding aspect might have repelled the avarice of freebooters, yet, from the proximity of their situation, and the valuable cargoes of hardy slaves in which they abounded, were continually infested by naval descents. The unfortified places near the shore surrendered without resistance; the fruits of their painful industry were plundered or destroyed, and the most valuable portion of their inhabitants dragged into captivity. The practice of piracy and invasion was not a temporary resource of war, prompted by necessity, or a just revenge: it grew into an ordinary profession, which was so far from being deemed dishonourable, that it conferred much glory and renown on those who exercised it with skill and bravery.*

During this disordered state of society, the arts of peace were almost entirely neglected, and Greece was ready to be plunged into the grossest barbarism, by its domestic dissensions. The irruptions of the Thracians, Amazons and other northern savages, threatened to accelerate this melancholy event, and to complete the ruin of the unhappy Hellenes.† But it may be observed in the affairs of human life, that any extraordinary measure of good or evil, commonly leads men to dread, or to expect, a sudden revolution of fortune; a natural sentiment, which, though liable to be abused by credulity and superstition, is founded on the firm basis of

* Thucyd. l. 1. οὗτος κόσμος καλῶς τούτο δρᾶν. The explanation in the text seems more consonant to Grecian manners in those ages, than that of the scholiasts, translated thus by Mr. Rochford, "Chez qui la piraterie étoit exercée avec une certaine probité." M. de l'Acad. v. 39.

† Lysias Orat. Funeb.

experience. The rudiments of the most useful designs are suggested always by necessity, often by calamity. The inroads of the wild mountaineers of Thrace, and of other Barbarians more remote, whose destructive cruelty may be understood by the unexampled fury with which even the feeblér sex* carried on the ravages of war, occasioned the first institution which restored some degree of present tranquillity to Greece, and laid the foundation of its future grandeur.

Circumstances which tended to civilize Greece. Origin of the Amphictyonic council. The northern districts of Thessaly being peculiarly exposed to invasion, the petty princes of that province entered into a confederacy for their mutual defence.† They assembled in spring and autumn at Thermopylæ, a place afterwards so illustrious, and then governed by *Amphictyon*, a descendant of Deucalion, whose name is immortalized in the *Amphictyonic* council. The advantages which the confederates derived from this measure, were soon perceived by their neighbours. The central states gradually acceded to their alliance, and, about the middle of the fourteenth century before Christ, Acrisius, king of Argos, and other princes of the Peloponnesus, were allowed to share the benefits and security of this useful association.

Argonautic expedition, A. C. 1263. After this event, the Amphictyons appear to have long confined themselves to the original purpose of their institution. The states, whose measures were directed by this assembly, found sufficient occupation in defending their own territories; and near a century elapsed, before they undertook, by common consent, any distant expedition. But it was not to be expected that their restless activity could be always exhausted in defensive war. The establishment of the Amphictyons brought together the chiefs most distinguished by birth and bravery. Glory and emulation, prompted

* The Amazons. See Lysias Orat. Funeb. and Herodotus iv. 110. Yet the existence of these warlike females was doubted as early as the days of the Emperor Hadrian, as we learn from Arrian: but what is said by that judicious and manly historian, seems sufficient to dispel the doubt. See Arrian expedit. Alexan. l. vii. p. 156.

† Marm. Oxon. E. 5.

them to arms, and revenge directed those arms against the Barbarians. Jason, Admetus, and other chieftains of Thessaly,* having equipped a small fleet in the neighbouring harbour of Iolcos, and particularly the ship *Argo*, of superior size and construction to any before known, were animated with a desire to visit foreign lands, to plant colonies in those parts of them that appeared most delightful, and to retort on their inhabitants the injuries which Greece had suffered from strangers.† The princes of the north having proclaimed this spirited design over the central and southern provinces, the standard of enterprise and glory was speedily surrounded by the flower of the Grecian youth,‡ who eagerly embraced this honourable opportunity to signalize their manly valour. Peleus, Tydeus, Telamon, and, in general, the fathers of those heroic chiefs, who, in the succeeding age, shone with distinguished lustre in the plains of Troy, are numbered among the leaders of the Argonauts. They were accompanied by the chosen warriors, and by the venerable prophets, of their respective tribes; by an *Esculapius*, the admired father of the healing art, and by the divine *Orpheus*,|| whose sublime genius was worthy to celebrate the amazing series of their adventures.

These adventures, however, have been too much adorned by the graces of Poetry, to be the proper subjects for historical composition. The designs of the Argonauts are veiled under the allegorical, or at least doubtful, phrase, “of carrying off the golden fleece;” which, though easily explained, if we admit the report that the inhabitants of the eastern banks of the Euxine extended fleeces of wool, in order to collect the golden particles which were carried down by the torrents from Mount

* Their names are mentioned by Apollodorus, Diod. Siculus, Pindar, Apollonius, &c.

† Herodot. l. i. Diodor. Sicul. l. iv.

‡ Pindar, Pythic. iv.

|| The testimony of Plato de Repub. l. x. of Isocrates in Busirid. sufficiently attest the poetical fame of Orpheus. The *Argonautica*, and other works ascribed to him, are collected by Eschenbachius, and published at Nuremberg 1702. That these, however, are the productions of a later age, appears from innumerable circumstances, some of which are mentioned by Fabricius, Bib. Græc. vol. i. p. 120.

Caucasus,* is yet described by such various language by ancient writers, that almost every modern who examines the subject, thinks himself entitled to offer, by way of explanation, some new conjecture of his own. But in opposition to the most approved of these conjectures, we may venture to affirm, that the voyage to Colchis was not undertaken with a view to establish extensive plans of commerce,† or to search for mines of gold, far less to learn the imaginary art of converting other substances into that precious metal;‡ all such motives supposing a degree of speculation and refinement unknown in that age to the gallant but untutored youth of Thessaly. The real object of the expedition may be discovered in its effects. The Argonauts fought, conquered, and plundered;§ they settled a colony on the shores of the Euxine;¶ and carried into Greece a daughter of the King of Colchis, the celebrated Medea,¶ a princess of Egyptian extraction, whose crimes and enchantments are condemned to eternal infamy in the immortal lines of Euripides.

Important consequences of the Argonautic expedition. Notwithstanding many romantic fictions that disfigure the story of the Argonauts, their undertaking appears to have been attended with a considerable and a happy effect on the manners and character of the Greeks. From the æra of this celebrated expedition, we may discover not only a more daring and more enlarged spirit of enterprise, but a more decisive and rapid progress towards civilization and humanity. The sullen and unsociable chiefs, whose acquaintance with each other most commonly arose from acts of mutual hostility, hitherto gave full scope** to the sanguinary passions which characterize Barbarians. Strength and courage were almost the only qualities which they admired: they fought and plundered at the head of their respective tribes, while the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts were regarded as fit objects only to excite

* Strabo, l. xi. p. 499.

† Eustath. in Homer.

‡ Suidas, *Memoires de l'Academ.* v. 9. *Exped. Argon.*

§ Diodor. *Ibid.*

¶ Xenoph. *Anab.*

¶ Euripid. *Med.*

** This was the brazen age described by Hesiod. *Oper. & Di.* l. i. v. 142—155. and by Plutarch in the life of Theseus.

their rage, and gratify their rapacity. But these gloomy warriors, having exerted their joint valour in a remote expedition, learned the necessity of acquiring more amiable virtues, as well as of adopting more liberal notions of the public interest. Military courage and address might alone procure them the respect of their immediate followers, since the safety of the little community often depended on the war-like abilities of the chieftain; but, when several tribes had combined in a common enterprise, there was less dependence on the prowess of any single leader. Emulation and interest naturally rendered all these leaders as jealous of each other, as desirous of the public esteem; and, in order to acquire this esteem, it was necessary to enhance the renown of martial spirit by the more valuable* virtues of justice and humanity.

When this glorious field first opened to the ambition of the Greeks, they cultivated it with a degree of energy equally ardent and successful. Innumerable were the exploits of Hercules, of Theseus, and of the divine sons of Leda,† and undertaken with infinite toil and danger, to promote the interest and safety, not of their particular tribes, but of the general confederacy. The Grecian woods and moun-

* Hesiod marks this change of manners. It happened between the expedition of the Argonauts and the siege of Thebes, since the latter was the first exploit in which his new race of men, *γενος δικαιωτερον και αρειον*, "a more just and nobler race," were engaged. See Hesiod. *Oper. & Di.* l. i. v. 155—165.

† "In order to obtain the immortal fruits of merit," says Aristotle, in his beautiful Ode to Virtue,

ὁ δῖος Ἡρακλῆς,
 Ἀηδᾶς τεκνυροὶ, πολλὰ ἀνέτλασαν,
 Ἔργοις σὺν ἀγρευόντες δύναμιν
 Σοὶς δὲ ποδοὺς Ἀχιλλεύς,
 Αἰῶς τ' Αἰδᾶο δόμον ἦλθον.

This ode, which is preserved in Diogen. Laert. in Aristot. and in Athenæus, l. xv. c. 16. proves the mind of the Stagyrite to have been as lofty as capacious: and, while it comprehended the whole circle of science, capable of reaching, in lyric poetry, the highest flights of Pindar and Horace. The latter, probably, had Aristotle in view, in ode 3. b. 3.

Hæc arte Pollux, & vagus Hercules

Innixus, arces attigit igneas.

But in the order of his names he is not so faithful to chronology.

tains abounded in lions, boars and other fierce animals,* that often roamed from their haunts, and spread terror and desolation through the adjoining valleys. The valleys themselves teemed with men of brutal strength and courage, who availed themselves of the weakness of government to perpetrate horrid deeds of violence and cruelty. The first worthies of Greece, animated rather with the daring and useful, than with the romantic spirit of chivalry, set themselves with one accord to remedy evils which threatened the existence of society. Their adventures have, doubtless, been embellished by the elegant fancy of poets and orators; but they will remain eternal monuments of generous magnanimity, which sacrifices the instinctive love of ease and pleasure to the acquired taste for glory and renown.†

The war of Thebes. A. C. 1225. The laws of war and peace gradually improved with the progress of humanity; and the first general enterprise, which succeeded the expedition of the Argonauts, proves that whole communities, as well as individuals, had begun to respect the virtues most essential to public happiness. The war of Thebes has deserved, therefore, to be recorded; while the more ancient hostilities between the Hellenic tribes, of which justice was not even the pretence, but lust or avarice the only cause, and wealth or beauty the only prize, are universally condemned to oblivion. Contempt of an ancient oracle, the involuntary crimes of Oedipus, and the unnatural cruelty of his sons; involved the royal family of Thebes in that maze of calamities, appropriated in all ages, from Sophocles‡ to Voltaire, as favourite subjects of the tragic muse. Eteocles and Polynices (these were the miserable sons

* In the shield of Hercules, Hesiod describes a boar fighting with a lion, and almost prevailing in the combat. That animal was no less terrible on the opposite coast of Asia than in Greece, as we learn from Herodotus, l. i. c. 34, & seq.

† Isocrat. Hellen. Encom. & Panegy. Lysias & Demosthen. Orat. Funebr. Pausan. Attic.

‡ I might have said Æschylus, whose "Seven against Thebes" is founded on the history related in the text. But the name of Sophocles will bring to the mind of every reader of taste and humanity, the Oedipus Tyrannus, and particularly the Oedipus Coloneus.

of Oedipus) having hastened the death, and drawn down the maledictions, of their unhappy father, agreed to sway, by turns, the Theban sceptre. Eteocles, the elder brother, reigned during the first year; but his ambitious temper, corrupted by the honours of royalty, refused to resign the throne at the appointed term of his command. His rival, Polynices, married the daughter of Adrastus, King of Argos, who enabled his son-in-law to assert, by force of arms, his just pretensions to the alternate inheritance. The allied princes, reinforced by Tydeus, Capaneus, and three other chiefs, marched to Thebes at the head of seven bands of armed followers, who invested the seven gates of the city. The Thebans, impatient of confinement within the walls of a place ill provided with supplies, yielded to the martial ardour of Eteocles, and repelled the assailants by a vigorous sally, in which the most illustrious combatants fell on both sides, and the wretched brothers perished by mutual wounds. The cause of the war being removed by this horrid catastrophe, the Argives craved leave to bury their dead; but the Thebans, exasperated against the daring invaders of their country, returned them an answer, which, according to the principles of that age, bade defiance to the dictates of nature, and the precepts of religion. In this extremity, Adrastus, the only chief who survived the battle, had recourse to the humane piety of the Athenians, who, uninfluenced by motives of ambition or interest, took arms in defence of public justice, and compelled the cruel obstinacy of the Thebans to grant the last melancholy honours to the ashes of their deceased enemies.* At the distance of ten years, the more fortunate sons of the chiefs who had fallen before the Theban walls, resented, with the fury of religious rage, the indignities that had been impiously offered to the manes of their fathers. They again laid siege to the guilty city, destroyed the lives and property of many of the inhabitants, dragged many into captivity, and compelled the remainder to acknowledge, as their king, the infant son of the injured Polynices.†

* Lysias Orat. Funeb.

† Confer. Homer. l. iv. v. 337. & passim. Hesiod. Op. & Di. Æschyl. Septem contra Thebas. Lysias Orat. Funeb. Statius Thebaid. Apollod. l. iii. Diodor. l. iv. Pausan. in Bœotic.

Circumstances which favoured the progress towards internal tranquillity in the Grecian states.

In their progress towards civilization, the Greeks perceived the advantages of political confederacy, before they became sensible to the benefits of civil union. The necessity of providing for defence against the assaults of foreign enemies, and the natural dictates of interest and ambition, unfolded the idea of a federal association between different communities, before the members of any one state had been sufficiently united in the system of domestic policy. Various clusters of towns and villages, situated in winding valleys, divided by lofty mountains, acknowledged the authority of kings or chieftains, who led forth their warlike youth to glory and danger. Summoned to arms against foreign enemies, they readily flocked to the standard of their king, and received with implicit submission, his commands in the field: but, when no common cause roused their emulation, or excited their valour, the inhabitants of each little township aspired at independent jurisdiction, and the nominal subjects of the same prince often terminated their differences by the decision of the sword.*

The example of Crete.

To cement such disorderly communities by laws and government, required an acquaintance with some more civilized people, among whom the effects of this happy union visibly prevailed. Such an example fortunately occurred in the wise institutions and policy of the Cretans, which are represented not only as the most ancient, but the best regulations, that ever were established in any portion of the Grecian territory.† The celebrated island, which fable has dignified with the imaginary honour of giving birth to some of the gods‡ of Greece, is entitled to the real praise of communicating to that country many useful improvements.

Peculiar circumstances of that island.

It had been early planted, as we had occasion already to observe, by a colony of Dorians. This colony, which received various|| accessions from Greece, enjoyed two advantages above their brethren on the continent. Their insular situation left them exposed, indeed,

* Thucydid. l. i. Plut. in Theseo.

† Plat. de Leg. & in Minoe. Aristot. Pol. l. ii. Plut. in Lycurg.

‡ Hesiod. Theog.

|| Homer, Iliad. l. xix. v. 172, &c.

to naval depredations, but delivered them from those fierce incursions by land, which often disfigured and desolated the mother country. A favourable gale wafted the unskilful mariners of antiquity from the shores of Crete to the capital of Egypt. The facility of communication thus introduced between the two countries an habitual intercourse, from which the barbarous islanders had nothing to lose, and every thing to gain. Rhadamanthus,* and others of their early kings or chieftains, whom interest or curiosity carried into Egypt and the East, appear to have had sagacity to observe, and dexterity to employ, several of the inventions and institutions of those powerful and civilized kingdoms, for the useful purpose of confirming their own authority, and bridling the fierce passions of their countrymen.

The elder Minos is peculiarly distinguished for ^{The elder Minos.} promoting this beneficial design. The doubtful appellation of Son of the Ocean, which perhaps, he might derive from his numerous voyages, leaves it uncertain whether he was a native Cretan, or a foreigner. In the countries which he had visited, he observed certain families invested, from time immemorial, with unbounded honours, as the immediate vicegerents of the divinity. The uncultivated, but free-born genius of Greece, always rejected this odious profanation ; and the prudence of Minos aspired only to obtain that respect for his office, which he would have vainly solicited for his person. We are not informed by what virtues, civil or military, he acquired, before the establishment of his laws, an extraordinary influence among the Cretans. But, as slaves multiplied to such a degree in the island during his reign, that agriculture and the mechanic arts were exercised by them alone, there is reason to conjecture that he had been extremely successful in war against his neighbours, and no less equitable in dividing the booty among the various Cretan tribes who followed the fortune of his arms. However this may be, it appears from the general evidence of antiquity, that Minos had address to persuade men, prone to wonder and to believe ; among whom,

* Strabo, l. x. p. 480.

whatever dazzled the imagination announced the presence of a divinity, that their favourite hero was admitted to the familiarity of the gods.* From them, he pretended to derive an invaluable system of laws, which he was enjoined to engrave on tables of brass. From Jupiter he received the regal sceptre, which entitled him to administer these laws, but obliged him to respect them. By command of the same god, he founded the cities of Cnossus, Cydonia, and Phestus; and united the distant subjects of his wide-extended domain, by such regulations as served alike to support the authority of the prince, and to maintain the rights of the people.†

Expedition
of Theseus
into Crete.

The beautiful arrangement of this political edifice struck the discerning eye of Theseus, the illustrious son of Ægeus, king of Athens, in his celebrated expedition to Crete, during the reign of the second Minos. The last-mentioned prince joined the splendour of military renown to the famed wisdom of his reverend ancestor. His maritime force exceeded the united strength of his neighbours; he subdued several of the circumjacent isles; and, while he permitted his own subjects to ravage the coasts of Greece, under pretence of lawful war, he effectually checked the piratical depredations of the Carians, Lycians, and Phenicians, which had hitherto proved so frequent and so destructive.‡ Athens experienced the effects of his power and ambition, and reluctantly submitted to a disgraceful tribute of seven youths, and as many virgins,|| which was cruelly exacted by a nation subsisting from the labour of slaves. The tributary captives were drawn by lot from the body of the people, who trembled at the annual return of the Cretan vessel. Discontents arose against the government of Ægeus, who seemed to bear the indignity with too much tameness; when his heroic son, with

* *Διὸς μεγάλου σαρισης.* Odyss. l. xix. v. 179. which Horace translates,

Jovis arcanis Minos admissus. L. i. Ode 28.

† Strabo, l. x. p. 480. Plato in Minoe. Diod. l. v. ‡ Thucydid. l. i.

|| Odyss. l. xi. v. 320. and Virgil, *Æn.* 6.

Tum pendere pœnas

Cecropidæ jussi, miserum! septena quotannis

Corpora natorum.

a patriotism congenial to his character, generously offered his life in the service of his country.* The fame of Theseus had already reached the ears of Minos, who respected his virtues; and this respect was converted into admiration, on beholding the Athenian prince a voluntary captive. Minos treated him with the affectionate kindness of ancient hospitality; gave him his daughter Ariadne in marriage; and declared the Athenians thenceforth free from a contribution equally cruel and ignominious. Theseus reaped great glory from this transaction. The vessel, in which he sailed, continued to be annually sent, for more than eight centuries afterwards, to return thanks to Apollo, in his favourite island of Delos;† and the fortunate voyage to Crete was celebrated by sacrifices, and other ceremonies handed down to the latest times of the Athenian republic.‡

Many extraordinary circumstances, invented by the poets, disfigure events, which are otherwise sufficiently authenticated. The unnatural amours of the abominable Pasiphaë, and the bloody feasts of the monstrous Minotaur,|| have been faithfully transcribed, from one age to another, in the tiresome compilations of injudicious mythologists; but it seems not to have occurred to those writers, that the expedition to Crete laid the foundation of the improvements afterwards introduced by Theseus into the Athenian government. The institutions and manners of that island presented a picture of more regular composition, and more harmonious colouring, than could be seen in any part of the Grecian continent. Various societies of freemen, all united under one government, all equal among themselves, and all served by slaves; no private property in land; the men eating at public tables, and the families subsisting from

* Ipse suum Theseus pro caris corpus Athenis

Projicere optavit.——

CATULLUS.

† Plato. Phædo.

‡ Plut in Theseo.

|| Hic crudelis amor tauri, suppostaque furto

Pasiphaë, &c.

The judicious Virgil places these strange stories in the sculptured porch of an ancient temple.

the common stock; the youth regularly trained to the gymnastic exercises, navigation, and war; a severe morality enforced by law, honour the reward of age and merit; and the whole community acknowledging the prerogative of an hereditary king, who derived his authority from Jupiter, but who was no longer entitled to the divine protection, than he continued to observe justice, and to maintain the unalienable privileges of his subjects.* Impressed with the salutary institutions which he beheld in this flourishing island, Theseus, upon his accession to the throne of his father, was ambitious to communicate them to his native country. The rudeness of the Athenians, indeed, admitted not the introduction of written laws. But the scattered villages of Attica were persuaded to embrace the regulations of the capital;† to unite in common ceremonies of religion; to acknowledge the reciprocal obligations of subjects; and, while they asserted the rights of citizens, to respect, during peace, and war, the sacred prerogative of royal majesty.

Thence
diffused
through
Greece.

The improvements in domestic policy, thus introduced into Attica by the example of Crete, and the wisdom of Theseus, were gradually adopted by the neighbouring provinces.‡ At the commencement

of the Trojan war, all the Grecian states had embraced one uniform system of government, uniting the independent spirit of European freedom with the respectful veneration of Egyptian and Asiatic superstition.|| This singular frame of policy, composed of materials seemingly incapable of alliance, was peculiarly well adapted to great and generous undertakings;

This enables the
Greeks to
undertake
the Trojan
war.

and unless the divine though limited authority of kings, had fortified the other institutions which served to tame the ferocity of the Greeks, there is reason to doubt whether their leaders could have roused above an hundred thousand stubborn Barbarians to a distant and a difficult enterprise, much less have de-

* Aristot. Polit. l. ii. c. 9, &c. Strabo, *ibid.* Plato de Leg.

† Thucyd. l. ii. Plut. in Theseo.

‡ Dionys. Halic. l. v.

|| Homer *passim*.

tained their reluctant impatience during ten years in the siege of Troy.

Before we examine the causes and incidents of this celebrated siege, to which the exploits hitherto related seem but unworthy preludes, it may be proper to take a short view of the strength and resources of the two nations, who were eager to shock in a conflict, that totally destroyed the one and proved extremely ruinous to the other. Exclusive of the provinces of Epirus and Macedonia, which long remained barbarous and uncultivated, the continental possessions of the Greeks were nearly equal to Scotland in extent, marked with still bolder features, and blessed with a warmer sun. In its length, the whole country is almost equally divided by two opposite gulfs; compressing between them a mountainous neck of land, to the breadth of only five miles, into the peninsula of Peloponnesus, and the territory extending northwards, from the extremity of the Corinthian isthmus to the southern frontier of Macedonia.* The Peloponnesus, an hundred and sixty miles in length, and scarcely one hundred in breadth, is every where intersected by mountains, particularly the towering ridges of Zarex and Taygetus. During the flourishing ages of Greece, this small peninsula contained seven independent communities of unequal power and fame, which ranked in the following order: The comparatively large, and highly diversified, territory of Laconia; the fruitful vale of Argos; the extensive coast of Achaia; the narrow but commercial isthmus of Corinth; the central and mountainous region of Arcadia; together with the more level countries of Elis and Messenia, which are throughout better adapted to tillage than any other provinces of the Peloponnesus.† The Grecian possessions beyond the Corinthian isthmus were more considerable, extending above two hundred miles from east to west, and one hundred and fifty from north to south. They were naturally divided by the long and intricate ridges of Olympus, Pindus, Oeta, and Ossa, into nine separate provinces; which during the celebrated

Description
of Greece;
its strength
and resources.

* Strabo, l. vii.

† Strabo, *ibid.* & Pausan. Messen.

ages of Grecian freedom, were occupied by nine independent republics. They comprehended the extensive and fertile plains of Thessaly and Bœotia, both of which were, in early times, much exposed to inundations; and the latter, abounding in subterranean caverns, was peculiarly subject to earthquakes; the less fertile, but more secure territory of Attica; the western provinces of Ætolia and Acarnania, encompassed on one side by dangerous seas, and confined on the other by almost impassable mountains; and the four smaller rocky districts of Phocis, Doris, Locris and Megara.*

It has been observed, that these names and divisions, which remained to the latest times, are pretty accurately marked by Homer, whose poems continued through succeeding ages, to be the approved standard and legal code, to which neighbouring communities appealed, in adjusting their disputed boundaries.† This observation, however, must be qualified chiefly by two exceptions. During the Trojan war, the extensive province of Thessaly sent forth above a fourth part of the whole Grecian strength, and was divided among many warlike leaders. It might naturally be expected, while agriculture and pasturage were the principal occupations subservient to human life, that a country, abounding in plains and meadows, should excel in population and in power.‡ When commerce, navigation, and the mechanic arts, enriched and adorned the middle and southern divisions of Greece, the northern district of Thessaly lost its ancient pre-eminence. The second exception arose from the extensive power of the house of Pelops, which, as already mentioned, had by fortunate marriages and rich successions, acquired dominion over the northern and eastern parts of the Peloponnesus, formerly containing several independent principalities, and, after the misfortunes of Agamemnon and his family, again divided into the immortal republics of Sparta, Argos, Corinth, and Achaia.

Number of
the Grecian
ships and
troops.

From this general view of the country, it will not appear remarkable, that, in an age when every able-bodied man was a soldier, Greece should have raised

* Strabo, l. vii.

† Plut. in Solon.

‡ Plato, in Menon.

an army of an hundred and two thousand men. The Arcanians alone, for reasons unknown, sent no forces to Troy. But the continent was assisted by the generous efforts of Crete, of Rhôdes, and of many smaller islands, which were subject to their respective princes, or governed by the wide extended dominion of Agamemnon. The vessels collected for transporting these forces to Asia amounted to twelve hundred sail. They were equipped at little expense, and built with little ingenuity, moved by only one bank of oars, and entirely unprovided with decks or anchors. Their complement varied in different vessels; some contained an hundred and twenty, others only fifty men, who appear to have been equally acquainted with the military art, as practised in that remote age, and with the rude simplicity of ancient navigation.*

The celebrated kingdom of Priam, against which this armament was directed, occupied the eastern banks of the Hellespont, the southern coast of the

Description
of Troas, or
Lesser
Phrygia.

Propontis, and the northern shores of the Ægean. From the river Esepus to the promontory of Lectum, the Trojan dominions extended in length two hundred miles; but their breadth was far less considerable, being irregularly compressed between three seas, and the lofty ridges of mount Ida. This delightful and picturesque country, which surpassed Greece in fruitfulness of soil and softness of climate,† was distinguished by the epithet of Hellespontian, from the large inland province which bore the common name of Phrygia.‡ The Lesser, or Hellespontian Phrygia, was planted, according to tradition, by a Grecian colony, about two hundred years before the Trojan war. The similarity of religion, language, and manners, sufficiently justified that opinion, and seems to have induced the most diligent inquirers of antiquity to regard not only the Trojans, but the Lycians and Pamphylians, as scattered branches of the Hellenic nation,|| which distance of place had gradually cut off from all communication with the trunk. The Asiatic Greeks were exposed to none of

History of
that coun-
try.

* Thucyd. *ibid.* Homer, *passim.* † Hippocrat. *de Loe.*

‡ Strabo, l. xiii. § Herodot. l. vii. Strabo, l. xiv.

those unfavourable circumstances already mentioned, which long retarded the improvement of their brethren in Europe. The fertile and extensive plains of Asia offered them the materials of more powerful kingdoms than Greece could afford; and, instead of being harrassed and endangered by the continual incursions of northern savages, they enjoyed the vicinity of the Phrygians and Lydians, nations described as flourishing in wealth and peace from the remotest antiquity.* From the prevalence of the Grecian language and customs on the one hand, and the name of the country on the other, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Trojans were a mingled race of Greeks, and Phrygians, collected by Dardanus, ancestor fifth in ascent from old Priam.

This adventurer, whose parentage Homer leaves uncertain, by calling him son of Jupiter,† founded a city on one of the many western branches of mount Ida, commanding a beautiful and fertile plain, and watered by the immortal rivers Simois and Scamander.‡ The new settlement flourished under his son, the wealthy Ericthonius, who, by the judicious management of his mares and stallions, supplied the neighbouring kingdoms with horses of a superior breed. His successor, Tros, communicated his name to the territory, which was often called Troas, and to the celebrated city Ilion, which his son Ilus, having removed his residence from the mountain, built on the adjoining plain. Laomedon, the successor of Ilus, fortified the town of Ilion, or Troy, with walls of such uncommon strength, that, in the language and belief of the times, they were deemed the work of the gods.|| Whether he defrauded his supposed auxiliaries of their promised rewards and sacrifices, or supplied the expense of this undertaking by despoiling their sacred shrines, it is certain that the guilt of Laomedon was believed to entail calamity on his unhappy descendants.

Reign of
Priam.

His son Priam, however, long enjoyed the deceitful gifts of fortune, before he was overtaken by the

* Herodot. l. i. Dionys. Halic. l. i. Suidas in voc. *Ασπασος*.

† Iliad, xx. v. 215.

‡ Ibid. xx. v. 216, &c. Strabo, lxiil.

|| Homer. Iliad, xx. v. 216, &c. Strabo, l. xiii.

vengeance of heaven. Having attained old age in the undisturbed possession of a throne, he was surrounded by a numerous and flourishing family, beloved by his subjects, and respected by his neighbours. Yet this amiable, but too indulgent prince, was destined to feel the sharpest pangs of human misery.

Hereditary feuds subsisted between the ancestors of Priam and those of Agamemnon, when the latter quit-^{Cause of the Trojan war.}ted their establishments in Asia, to seek new settlements in Greece. The insult offered to Ganymede, a beautiful Trojan youth, by the brutal fury of Tantalus,* was retorted on Menelaus the fourth in descent from this infamous prince, by the rape and detention of his queen, the celebrated Helen. Paris, the ill-fated son of Priam, was the author of this new injury. But resentment for the wrongs of his house formed not the only motive which engaged the youthful levity of Paris to dishonour the sister-in-law of Agamemnon. Helen^{Beauty and adventures of Helen, daughter of the King of Sparta.} was the daughter of Tyndareus, king of Sparta. The illustrious honours of her family were adorned by the generous magnanimity of her brothers, Castor and Polydeuces, whose exploits shone conspicuous in all the military expeditions of that gallant age. But the native lustre of Helen needed not the aid of foreign ornament. Even in the tender age of childhood, her opening charms had inflamed the heart of Theseus,† the most admired and the most virtuous of the Grecian chiefs. The fame of her beauty increased with her ripening age, and her person became an object of eager contention among those who, from birth or merit, were entitled to aspire at the invaluable prize. Tyndareus, solicitous to prevent the violence of a second lover, (for agreeably to the manners of his age, Theseus had carried her off by force,) bound the various suitors by oath to defend the honour of his daughter, and to secure the possession of her charms to the man who

* It has been observed, that the story of Tantalus, father of Pelops, was probably the invention of a later age. It is certain that, whatever might prevail in Phrygia, the unnatural passion, which disgraced the later times of Greece, was unknown in that country during the heroic ages. Natal. Com. l. ix. c. 13.

† Plut. in Theseo.

She marries should be honoured with her choice.* The princely
Menelaus, mien and insinuating manners of Menelaus were
who suc- preferred to more solid qualities in several of his
ceeds to numerous competitors. Having married the heiress
that king- of Tyndareus, he succeeded, in her right, to the Spar-
dom. tan throne.†

The graceful pair had not long enjoyed the hon-
 ours of royalty, and the sweets of conjugal union, when their
 happiness was interrupted by the arrival of the son of Priam,

Character the handsomest man of his age, and singularly
of Paris, son adorned with the frivolous accomplishments that
of Priam. often captivate the weakness of a female mind.

Though a soldier of no great renown, Paris had strongly imbi-
 bed the romantic spirit of gallantry which prevailed‡ in the
 heroic ages and was distinguished by an ardent passion for
 beauty, which, notwithstanding the general softness of his un-
 warlike character, prompted him to brave every danger in
 pursuit of his favourite object. Animated by the hope of be-
 holding the inimitable model of what he most adored, he seized
 the opportunity afforded him by a voyage of Menelaus into
 Crete, visited the dominions of his hereditary enemies, and
 solicited the rites of hospitality at the Spartan court.

The queen His person, his accomplishments, his address, and
seduced and still more, the voluntary hardships which he had
carried to endured for her sake seduced the inconstant affec-
Troy. tions of the Grecian Queen. Enamoured of the

elegant stranger, she abandoned her country and her hus-
 band; and having transported her most valuable treasure with-
 in the Trojan walls, defied the resentment of Greece, and the
 vengeance of heaven.

The Greeks It was now the time for Menelaus to crave the
determine stipulated assistance of his ancient rivals. His
to recover demand was enforced by the authority of Agamem-
her.

* Thucydid. l. i. c. 9.

† Pausan. Lacon.

‡ Perseus had carried off the African Medusa; Jason, Medea of Colchis;
 Theseus, the Amazon Antiope; Hercules, Megara, Iole, Deaneira, &c. The
 historical poets of the heroic ages might have said with Ariosto,

Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,

Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese Jo canto.

non.* At the summons of the two brothers, the confederates assembled at Ægium, the capital of Achaia; confirmed the obligation of their former promise; settled the proportion of troops to be raised by each prince; determined the time and place of their departure; and named Agamemnon, the most powerful among them, to the chief command in an expedition which so deeply concerned the honour of his family.

Aulis a sea-port of Bœotia, was appointed for the place of rendezvous and embarkation.† Before the whole armament sailed from thence, Ulysses King of Ithaca, and, what may seem extraordinary, the injured Menelaus, undertook a solemn embassy to Troy, in order to demand restitution and reparation; but returned highly disgusted with their reception and treatment. Some members of the Trojan council had the barbarity to propose their immediate death. Their just indignation increased the warlike ardour of their associates. But contrary winds long retarded their departure. The Trojans had time to strengthen their ramparts, to collect arms and provisions, and to summon the assistance of distant confederates. The martial spirit of the age, together with a sense of common danger, brought many powerful auxiliaries to Priam. His cause was defended by the hardy mountaineers, who covered the back of his kingdom; by the Carians, Lycians, and other nations of Asia Minor, extending from the mouth of the river Halys to the southern extremity of Cicilia; and by the Pelasgi, Thracians, and Pæonians, fierce Barbarians who inhabited the European side of the Hellespont and Propontis. Confiding, however, rather in their domestic strength than in foreign assistance, the Trojans determined to defend their native shores against hostile invasion. The debarkation of the Greeks was purchased by much blood. Having effected a descent, they encamped on the Trojan plain, but lost the only opportunity which they enjoyed, during many years, of crushing at once the power of their enemies; who immediately shut themselves up within their impenetrable walls, leaving the city

Sail to Troy
under the
command of
Agamem-
non.

Effect a de-
scent on the
Trojan
coast.

* Thucyd. l. i. c. 9.

† Hesiod, Oper. & Dies.

open only on the side of mount Ida, from which they received corn, cattle, and other necessary supplies.

Causes
which pro-
tracted the
siege of
Troy.

Agamemnon, as there was reason to expect from the manners of his age, had been more industrious in collecting a great army, than provident in contriving means by which it might keep the field. The provisions transported from Greece were speedily consumed, while the operations of the siege promised little hopes of success, the Greeks being unacquainted with any military engines fitted to make an impression on the Trojan walls. With such a numerous army, they might have converted the siege into a blockade; but scarcity of supplies compelled the greater part of them to quit the camp. The resource of ravaging the adjacent country soon exhausted itself. Many bethought themselves of cultivating the rich vales of the Chersonesus, whose industrious inhabitants had recently been expelled or destroyed, by the fierce incursions of the barbarous Thracians.* Others had recourse to piracy, scoured the neighbouring seas, ravaged the unprotected coasts of the Hellespont and Ægean, and plundered or demolished such unfortified places as acknowledged the dominion, or assisted the arms of Troy.† These ravages excited the rage of the Asiatics, and rendered them more hearty in the cause of their confederates. In this manner nine summers and winters elapsed, without affording the nearer prospect of a decision to the contest; but, in the tenth year of the war, the seeming misfortunes of the Greeks precipitated the downfall of the proud city of Priam. A dreadful pestilence invaded the camp of the besiegers, and long continued to rage with unabating fury. This calamity was followed by the well known quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, which deprived the Grecian army of its principal strength and ornament. The Trojans derived new spirits from the misfortunes of their enemies; they ventured to abandon the protection of their walls, boldly assailed the Grecian camp, and risked several engagements, in most of which they were victorious. In the last of

That city ta-
ken in the
tenth year
of the war.

* Thucydid. l. i.

† Homer, *passim*.

these, the beloved friend of Achilles was slain by the arm of Hector, the bravest and most generous of the Trojan race. This event, which was infinitely more dreadful than death to the affectionate ardour of the Grecian chief, stifled his hitherto inexorable resentment against the proud tyranny of Agamemnon. His return to the camp restored the declining fortune of the Greeks; and the indignant fury of his rage was quenched in the detested blood of Hector, whose patriotic valour had long been the firmest bulwark of his father's kingdom. The destruction of Troy* soon followed the death of her darling hero. The city, whether taken by storm or by surprise, was set on fire in the night; most of the citizens perished by the sword, or were dragged into captivity; and only a miserable remnant escaped through the confused horror of raging flames and expiring kinsmen.

The burning of Troy happened eleven hundred ^{Future fortunes of} and eighty-four years before the Christian æra. ^{Troy.} Neither the city nor territory ever assumed, in any succeeding age, the dignity of independent government.† The sea-coast was planted eighty years after the Trojan war, by new colonies from Greece; and the inland parts submitted to the growing power of the Lydians, whose arms overspread and conquered all the finest provinces of Lesser Asia‡.

The Greeks had recovered possession of the admired beauty of Helen; they had taken complete vengeance on the fa-

* We should probably know something more of the history of the Trojan war, if the works of Pisander remained. Macrobius, in speaking of the plagiarisms of the Romans from Greek writers, has the following passage: "Quæ Virgilius traxit a Græcis dicturumne me putetis, quæ vulgo nota sunt?.....vel quod aversionem Trojæ cum Sinone suo et equo ligneo, cæterisque omnibus, quæ librum secundum faciunt, a *Pisandro* pene ad verbum transcripserit, qui inter Græcos poetas eminet," &c. Macrobi. l. v. c. 2.

† I have carefully examined the evidence given by Bochart (Epist. num *Æneas* unquam fuit in Italia) and by Mr. Wood (Essay on the original genius of Homer,) to prove that the descendants of *Æneas* reigned in Troy. But notwithstanding the learned ingenuity of a profound, and the plausible criticism of an elegant scholar, the matter seems still too doubtful to warrant contradicting the popular opinion.

‡ Hesiod. l. ii. Thucyd. l. i. Justin, l. xviii. Strabo, l. iii.

The calamitous return of the Greeks. mily* and nation of her unhappy seducer; but the misfortunes which were the natural consequence of the Trojan expedition, left them little reason to boast of their victory. Of five Bœotian commanders, only one remained, and the siege had been proportionably fatal to the leaders of other tribes, as well as to their warlike followers. Those who lived to divide the rich spoils of Troy, were impatient to set sail with their newly acquired treasure, notwithstanding the threatening aspect of the skies. Many of them perished by shipwreck; the rest were long tossed on unknown seas; and when they expected to find in their native country the end of their calamities, they were exposed to suffer greater calamities there, than any which they had yet endured. The thrones of several of the absent princes had been usurped by violence and ambition; the lands of various communities had been occupied by the invasion of hostile tribes: even the least unfortunate of those adventurers found their domains uncultivated, or their territories laid waste; their families torn by discord, or their cities shaken by sedition. And thus the most celebrated enterprise of combined Greece tended to plunge that delightful and once happy country into barbarism and misery.†

* I dwell not on a subject which has been treated by the great masters of the passions. See Virgil.

Forsitan et Priami fuerint quæ fata requiras, &c.

† Plato, de Leg. I. iii. Thucyd. I. i. p. 9.

CHAP. II.

Religion.—Government.—Arts.—Manners, and Character.

THE ancient Greeks had strongly imbibed an opinion, that the country in which they lived was peculiarly favourable to the dignity of human nature. The voluptuous climates of Asia produced invention and ingenuity, but softened the tempers of men into a fitness for servitude. The rigorous severity of European skies gave strength and agility to the limbs, and hardy boldness to the mind, but chilled the fancy, and benumbed the finer feelings of the soul. The inhabitants of the east and south were degraded below the condition of humanity, by an unfortunate abuse of power, while the turbulent sons of the north and west were incapable, from ignorance and indocility, of submitting to any regular system of government. The Greeks alone, possessing an intermediate situation between the extremes of cold and heat, united courage and capacity; tempered the stern and manly, with the gentler virtues; and enjoyed the double advantage of liberty and laws.*

Introduc-
tion.

This splendid observation is too flattering to the dictates of national vanity to be hastily adopted by a cautious inquirer into truth, who will be apt to ascribe the superior lustre of Grecian manners, rather to the elegant imagination of authors, than to the intrinsic merit of their subject. Yet it must be acknowledged, several circumstances would lead us to believe, that the great poet to whom we owe our principal information concerning the ancient state of Greece, copied from nature only. The majesty of Virgil, the splendour of Tasso, and the sublimity of Milton, are not sufficient to conceal an effort in those noble writers to main-

The author-
ity of Ho-
mer, as an
Historian.

* Aristot. Politic. l. vii. c. 7. Isocrat. Govern. Athen. Panegyric. & Panathen.

tain the tone which they have assumed ; a desire to embellish the manners which they describe ; an ambition to elevate and to adorn their poems by the use of a marvellous machinery, which had not its foundation in the experience, and (as to Virgil and Tasso) scarcely in the belief of their own age. In Homer, there is neither embellishment, nor effort, nor disguise of any kind : he relates what he has seen and heard with unaffected simplicity ; his ideas and sentiments are not only clothed in all the pleasing graces of poetry, but arrayed in the charms of persuasive truth ; and an amasing diversity of characters, preserving amidst innumerable shades of discrimination, a general air of resemblance, distinguish the Iliad and Odyssey above other poetical compositions, and prove them to have been copied, not from the limited combinations of human invention, but from the wide variety of impressions in the rich store-house of nature. In some descriptive parts of his poem, Homer doubtless yielded to the luxuriance of his inimitable fancy ; but it seems plain from internal evidence only, that he delineates with minute accuracy, the geography, mythology, history, and manners of Greece ; and that his observations concerning all these subjects are perfectly agreeable to the opinions and belief which universally prevailed among his countrymen. If this matter required the aid of foreign evidence, it might be fully confirmed by the testimony of the Greek historians, who support in every instance the veracity of the poet ; asserting not only the authenticity of the facts which he relates, but the influence of the causes to which he ascribes them.*

* The nature and transactions of the gods, which justly shock the feelings of the modern reader, are perfectly conformable to the belief of the Greeks. The continual interposition of these ethereal beings in the affairs of human life, is justified by Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and all succeeding writers. Herodotus, l. i. c. 131. explains the reason why the Persians erected neither temples, nor images, nor altars, by saying, *οτι ουκ ανθρωποφους ενομισαν τους θεους, καταπερ οι Έλληνες, ειναί*, "because they did not, like the Greeks, believe the gods to partake of human nature, or form." That the gods often appeared in a human shape, is taken for granted by Pausanias in Arcad. and Plutarch. de Music. The same opinion was firmly maintained by Julian, an orthodox Pagan, in a later age. Many instances will occur in the following history to prove the exact conformity of Homer's descriptions to the general belief of his country.

It may be observed however, by those who would repress the ebullitions of Grecian vanity, that, admitting the poems of Homer as complete evidence concerning the ancient state of his country, all the advantage that would follow from this supposition is, that the Greeks have been accurately described at an earlier period of their society than most other nations; but the silence of those nations cannot reasonably be interpreted as a proof of their inferiority to the Greeks in manners or in policy. The masterly description of a philosophic historian has rescued the antiquities of one other people from oblivion; and the generous spirit of *their* simple, but manly institutions, as painted by his expressive pencil, is scarcely disgraced by a comparison with the boasted customs of the heroic ages.

Comparison between the Greeks of the heroic ages, and the Germans as described by Tacitus.

In the preference of military glory to all other advantages, in the freedom of debate in the public assemblies, and in the protection afforded to the rights and liberties of the meanest citizen, the treatise of Tacitus will equally apply to the Germans and to the Greeks. But there is one material circumstance wanting in the German, which adds peculiar beauty to the Grecian, character. Among the rude inhabitants of ancient Germany, the offices of priest and king were not united in the same person. The rites of religion were administered by a particular order of men, who might abuse the superstitious fears of the multitude to promote their own selfish designs; and the dread of superior powers, though sometimes employed to enforce the dictates of nature, and to promote the operations of government, might also, with equal success, be employed to weaken the impressions of the one, and to resist the authority of the other. Besides this unfavourable circumstance, the superstition of the Germans was of a dark and gloomy kind, little connected with the ordinary duties of society, recommending principally the practice of courage, the only virtue which there was not any occasion to recommend; and promising, as the reward of what was deemed the highest excellence in life, the

enjoyment of an infamous paradise of immortal drunkenness after death.*

The religion of the Greeks. The mythology of the Greeks was of a more agreeable, and of a far more useful nature. The sceptre, which denoted the connexion of civil power

with sacred protection, was conferred on those who, while they continued the humble ministers of the gods, were appointed to be the chief, but accountable guardians of the people.† The same voice that summoned the warriors to arms, or that decided, in time of peace, their domestic contentions, conducted the order of their religious worship, and presided in the prayers and hymns addressed to the divinity. These prayers and hymns, together with the important rite of sacrifice, (which likewise was performed by royal hands,) performed the *ceremonial* part of the Grecian religion. The *moral* was far more

Its happy influence on society. extensive, including the principal offices of life, and the noblest virtues of the mind. The useful quality of courage was peculiarly acceptable to the stern god of war; but the virtues of charity and hospitality were still more pleasing to the more amiable divinities.‡ The submission of subjects to their prince, the duty of a prince to preserve inviolate the rights of subjects,|| the obedience of children to their parents,§ the respect of the young for the aged, the sacred laws of truth, justice, honour, and decency, were inculcated and maintained by the awful authority of religion. Even the most ordinary transactions of private life were consecrated by the piety of the Greeks. They ventured not to undertake a voyage, or a journey, without soliciting the propitious aid of their heavenly protectors. Every meal (and there were three¶ in a day) was accompanied with a sacrifice and libation. The com-

* Tacit. de Morib. German.

† Ποιμενες λαων.

‡ ——— προς γαρ Διος ειδω' απαντες
 Ξεινοι τε πτωχοι τε.

All strangers and beggars come from Jove. Odys. xiv. 56.

|| Iliad, xvi. v. 385.

§ It is not humanity, but the fear of the gods, that is assigned as the reason by Telemachus for not sending away his mother. Odys. 2.

¶ Αριζον δειπνων δορκτος.

mon forms of politeness, the customary duties of civility, were not decided by the varying taste of individuals, but defined by the precise voice of the gods.*

It would have served little purpose to oppose salutary laws to the capricious licence of Barbarians, without guarding those laws by very powerful sanctions. Whether these sanctions be founded on opinion or on fact is, with respect to their influence on the mind, a matter of little moment. The dreaded vengeance of imaginary powers may be equally effectual with the fear of the axe and halter. The certainty of this vengeance was firmly established in the Grecian creed; and its operation was supposed to be so immediate and palpable, that it was impossible for the inattention of men to overlook, or for their address to elude its force.† The daring violations of the sacred law‡ were speedily overtaken by manifest marks of the Divine displeasure. “The insolence and violence of the corrupted youths,” says Homer,|| “cried aloud to heaven, whose decrees were soon executed by the avenging hands of Ulysses.” The judgments inflicted on guilty communities were so familiar to the minds of men, that the poet introduces them by way of similes;§ and it is evident from his writings throughout, that every important event, prosperous or adverse, which happened

The sanctions of their religion.

* The king of the Phæacians does not detain Ulysses longer than he chooses lest he should offend the gods. Odyss. viii. See also the behaviour of Ulysses and Telemachus, in the cottage of Eumæus, Odyss. xiv. and xvi.

† See the first book of Hesiod’s poem “Of works and Days,” throughout: and particularly

Ω Περση! σὺ δ’ ἀκούε δικης, μηδενβριω φέλλε, from v. 110 till v. 242; and again,

Τονδε γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι νόμον διέταξε Κρονίων, from v. 274 till v. 291.

‡ Θεμίσας δῖος. Homer, passim. || Odyss. i.

§ See a beautiful example of this, Iliad. xvi. v. 385. The expression of Hesiod is remarkable:

Πάντα ἰδὼν Δίος ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ πάντα νοήσας,
Καὶ νῦν ταδε, αἶψα ἐβέλησι, ἐπιδερκεται, &c.

“The eye of Jove, that beholds all, and observes all, looks upon these transactions when he pleases; nor does it escape his notice what kind of justice is rendered in the city.”

either to individuals or to nations, appeared to the pious resignation of the Greeks, the reward of their religion and and virtue, or the punishment of their irreligion and vice.* The merit of the father was often acknowledged in the protection of the son; and the crimes of a guilty progenitor were often visited on his descendants to the third and fourth generation.†

These observations are confirmed, not only by the writings of Homer and Hesiod throughout, but by almost every page of Herodotus, of Pindar, as well as of the Greek tragedians and historians; and yet they seem to have escaped the notice of some of the most ingenious inquirers into the opinions of antiquity. The authority of Greek writers strongly opposes two systems, which have been supported with great ability, and which have gained considerable credit in the world. The first, that the religion of the ancients had little or no connexion with morality: the second, that the governments of Greece could not have been supported without the doctrine of a future state.‡

* The success of the Greeks against Troy proves both parts of the proposition. All the misfortunes of the Grecian chiefs were inflicted as punishments. Oilean Ajax was slain for his presumption by Neptune (Odys. iv.) and Ajax, the son of Telamon, was a memorable example of the fatal effects of the same vice. When Minerva offered to him her assistance, he desired her to go to others, for the enemy would never attempt to penetrate where Ajax fought. Before his departure for Troy, Telamon prayed that the gods would give valour to his son; when the proud son, aspiring above the condition of humanity, said, That any man might be brave and victorious by the assistance of the gods; for his part, he expected to obtain glory by his own merit:—the gods punished him with madness, and, after exposing him to the ridicule of his enemies, made him fall by his own hands. See the Ajax of Sophocles, from ver. 760 to ver. 800.

† Minerva protected Telemachus on account of his father's merit. Odys. passim. The misfortunes of the royal families of Thebes and Argos, exhibited in the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, abundantly prove the truth of the last observation.

‡ See Hume's Natural History of Religion, and Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses. The eleventh book of the Odyssey, which the ancients called the *Νεσπομάρτυα*, is the obscurest, and in my opinion, the least agreeable part of Homer. The ghosts are all condemned to a melancholy and dreary state; even the greatest heroes are very miserable and dejected; and there is not any mention of the place of reward for the virtuous, though the punish-

The connexion between religion and morality is clearly asserted in the various passages to which we have had occasion to allude ; and the belief of a future state of retribution cannot, according to the principles of the learned author of the Divine Legation of Moses, be reckoned necessary to the government of men who are fully persuaded of the actual and immediate interposition of divine wisdom and justice, to regulate, by temporal rewards and punishments, the affairs of the present life.*

As this persuasion had such general and happy effects on the manners of the Greeks, it may be proper to consider its origin, and to describe more particularly the nature and genius of the superstition to which it gave birth ; a superstition which, two thousand years after losing its imaginary authority over the useful occupations of men, still preserves a real power over their most elegant amusements.

Origin of
the gods of
Greece not
explained in
history.

It belongs not to the design of this work to search for the mythological tenets of Greece in the opinions of other nations : a subject of inquiry upon which much learned conjecture and much laborious ingenuity have already been very laudibly,

ment of the wicked is clearly announced. *Iliad*, iii. v. 278. Homer speaks of the Elysian fields but once (*Odyssey* iv. ver. 563.) Proteus tells Menelaus that he is not *destined to die at Argos*, and that the gods would send him εἰς Ἠλιδίων πεδίων καὶ περιστά γαίης ; so that, if the language is not metaphorical, Homer's Elysium was only a delicious spot on this earth, and situate, according to Strabo's conjecture, on the southern coast of Spain. Strabo, l. iii. Ulysses, (*Odys.* ii. ver. 600.) sees the image of Hercules in Tartarus, but the hero himself, as the poet informs us, was feasting with the immortal gods. I have never met with any intelligible explanation of this passage, the absurdity of which appeared a proper subject of ridicule to Lucian, in *Diogen. & Hercul.*—Hesiod's Elysium is more agreeable.

* The gods, indeed, are sometimes engaged in very unwarrantable transactions ; but these are only means to accomplish some wise and just end, which the will of providence, the *δῖος βούλη*, or fate, had previously determined. Examples also may be brought from Homer, of men attempting to obtain by costly sacrifices, the assistance of the gods in acts of injustice and cruelty. This must be allowed to be an inconsistency in Grecian superstition, or rather in the passions which gave it birth.

but I fear not very successfully, employed.* By the dim light of etymology and tradition, and the deceitful glare of legend and fable, inquisitive men have endeavoured to trace the corrupted streams of Pagan worship to the pure fountain of the Jewish dispensation.† But the majesty of Jehovah is very feebly represented by the united power of Homer's divinities; and the mythology of the Greeks is of such a peculiar texture, that whencesoever originally derived, it must have undergone a particular modification in the Grecian soil: nor is it easy to concur with the opinion of writers who bring it immediately from Egypt, Chaldea, or Lesser Asia, when we consider that there is not the smallest vestige in Homer of the judicial astrology which prevailed so strongly in the two first,‡ or of the worshipping of idols, which almost universally predominated in the last.||

Philosophic
account of
it.

The difficulty of giving such an historical deduction of the Grecian faith as would not be exposed to innumerable objections, obliges us to trace its origin in the natural passions of the human heart; the hopes, the fears, the wants, the misery of man, which have in all ages rendered him a prey to the terrors of superstition.§ This melancholy passion which, in the civilized countries of modern Europe, operates only at distant intervals, and chiefly in the unfortunate moments of disease and danger, maintains a constant and uninterrupted power over the minds of Barbarians.

* Bochart's Geograph. Bryant's New Analysis. Fourmant, Le Clerk, de la Pluche, &c. Their doctrine is opposed in the extraordinary work of Vice Neapolitano, entitled "Principi di Scienza nuova d'intorno alla comune Natura delle Nazione." The third edition of this work was published at Naples in 1744.

† The general doctrine of Providence, the rebellion in heaven, the state of innocence, the fall of man, atonement by sacrifice, a future state of retribution, for which the present life is only preparatory, all, or some of these tenets, are found in the traditions of all nations, Greeks and Barbarians. See Hesiod, Oper. & Di. ver. 110. and ver. 165. and Theog. ver 725. and ver. 220.

‡ Diodorus Sicul. l. ii. Exod. chap. vi. Plin. l. xxx.

|| The Old Testament, passim.

§ Παῖτες δε θεων χερσιν αἰσθανονται—"All men stand in need of the gods." Hom. Odyssey, iii.

The disproportionate force of the same principle among rude and among civilized men, is ascribed by a common proverb to the gross ignorance of the former ; but it may, with more propriety, perhaps, be deduced from their precarious and unhappy manner of life, the continual dangers to which their condition is exposed, and the dreadful calamities in which the whole society is too frequently involved.* Even among polished nations, the power of reason and philosophy, however highly it may be extolled when the gentle current of life flows with placid tranquillity, always proves too feeble to resist the mountain torrent and the storm of winter. Under the pressure of sudden or inextricable calamity, all those, who are not more or less than men, have recourse to the immediate assistance of invisible powers ; and, in the splendid abodes of wealth and power, as well as in the American village or Tartar horde, the æra of a famine, a pestilence, or an earthquake, is marked by sincere expressions of faith and commemorated by signal monuments of piety.†

The great pillar of superstition, raised by the anxious passions of men, was fortified in Greece by a circumstance incidental to all nations at a certain stage of their political progress. There is a period when nations emerging from barbarity, but not yet corrupted by the narrow pursuits of avarice, not yet softened by the mean pleasures of luxury, or contracted by the dangerous refinements of a selfish philosophy, enjoy a peculiar sensibility of character, which exerts itself in the ardour of social affection, and strengthens, by a thousand associations, their belief of invisible and intelligent powers. To men, thus disposed to wonder and to believe, whatever dazzles the imagination, announces the presence of a deity ; dreams and celestial appearances are deemed sacred and infallible admonitions ; the silence and thick shade of a forest fills the soul with religious awe ; and persons, distinguished by

* *Δυσυχίας ἐπιστάσις καὶ σωτηρίας ἀπογορεύσις εὐχῇ θείῃ.* Schol. in Homer. Tum præcipuus votorum locus est, cum spei nullus est. Plin. l. viii. c. 16.

† In most men, true religion itself must, from the nature of human passions, have the greatest, because an undivided, influence over the mind, in seasons of inextricable calamity.

justice and piety, easily persuade themselves and others, that as the beloved favourites of heaven, they are frequently honoured with holy inspirations, and sometimes indulged with the visible presence and happy intercourse of their Divine protectors.* Not only the religion, but the ancient language and manners of Greece, sufficiently attest the existence of this excessive sensibility, which, in those early times, gave an easy victory to the indulgent powers of fancy, over the severe dictates of reason.

The nature of the gods. The nature, the characters, and the occupations of the gods, were suggested by the lively feelings of an ardent, rather than by the regular invention of a cultivated mind. These celestial beings were subject to the blind passions which govern unhappy mortals. Their wants, as well as their desires, were similar to those of men. They required not the gross nourishment of meat and wine, but they had occasion to repair the waste of their ethereal bodies by nectar and ambrosia; and they delighted in the steam of the sacrifices, which equally gratified their senses, and flattered their vanity.† The refreshment of sleep was necessary to restore their exhausted strength;‡ and, with the addition of a superior, but limited degree of power, and wisdom, and goodness, the gods of the heroic ages were nothing more than immortal men.

* Pausan. (in Arcad.) calls them ξῆνοι καὶ συμποσιῶτες, guests and companions at the same table. Plutarch, in his Treatise on Music, cites as authorities Anticles and Istros, two ancient authors, who wrote concerning the apparitions of the gods. All that has reached the present times respecting this curious subject, is collected in a dissertation of John Gottlob Nimptsch (Leipsic, 1720,) in which he treats of the number of the divinities who appeared most commonly to men; of the form under which they appeared; the usual time, and general causes, of their appearing, and the ordinary circumstances accompanying it. See also *Memoires de l'Academie*, vol. ix. *Mem. sur les Mœurs des Siècles Heroïques*.

† These observations naturally result from Homer; but the doctrine of sacrifices, as expiations for crimes, so universally diffused over the ancient and modern world, would perhaps still merit the examination of an able divine.

‡ Mercury says to Calypso, he would not have fatigued himself by travelling over such a length of sea and land, without a very powerful reason. *Odyss.*

What was wanting in the dignity and perfection, was supplied by the number of the gods.* Homer only describes the principal and reigning divinities; but Hesiod, who gives the genealogical history of this fanciful hierarchy, makes the whole number amount to thirty thousand. Among these, every virtue had its protector, every quality of extensive power in human life had its patron, and every grove and mountain and river its favourite inhabitants. Twelve divinities† of superior rank presided over the active principles of the universe, and the leading virtues of the mind; but even these distinguished beings were subject to the unrelenting power of vengeance‡ and the fates,|| “who pursue the crimes of men and gods, and never cease from their wrath till they have inflicted just punishment on the guilty sons of earth and heaven.”§

The materials which fancy had created, poetry Particular effects of the Grecian religion. formed into beauty, and policy improved into use.

¶ The creed of the Greeks, thus adorned and enlarged, became the happiest antidote against the furious resentment, the savage cruelty, and the fierce spirit of sullen independence, which usually characterize the manners of Barbarians.¶ Yet these dreadful passions sometimes forced their way through every mound which wisdom had erected in order to oppose their course. Laws sacred and profane were feeble barriers against the impetuosity of their rage. The black vengeance of the heart was exerted in deeds of horror. The death of an enemy could not satisfy their inhuman cruelty. They burned with desire to drink his hated blood, to devour his quivering

* *Fragilis & laboriosa mortalitas in partes ista digessit, infirmitatis suæ memorem, ut portionibus quisquis coleret, quo maxime indigeret.* Plin. ii. 7.

† The Roman religion was mere plagiarism, so that Ennius might well translate two lines of an ancient Greek poet, which includes the names of the principal divinities of Greece and Italy:

Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars,
Mercurius, Jovi, Neptunus, Vulcanus, Apollo.

ENNIUS apud Apuleium.

‡ Νεμεσις. | Æschyl. Prom. Vinct. v. 515, & seq. § Hesiod. Theog.

¶ Impiger iracundus inexorabilis acer

Negans jura sibi facta, nihil non arrogans armis—

HORAT.

will be found the general character of all barbarous nations.

limbs, and to expose his mangled remains to indignities equally odious and abominable in the sight of gods and men.* The powerful influence of religion was directed against the wild excesses of this sanguinary temper. The brave Tydeus lost for ever the protection of his adored Minerva by a single act of savage ferocity. Humanity was inculcated by every precept of reason, and enforced by the strongest motives of hope and fear. It was a firm article of belief, that hands stained with blood, even in the exercise of honourable war, were unworthy, till purified by lustration, to be employed in the most ordinary functions of sacred worship.†

It would require a volume completely to illustrate the salutary effects of this ancient and venerable superstition, which was distinguished above most other false religions, by the uncommon merit of doing much good, without seemingly occasioning any considerable harm to society. The Grecian tenets, while they inculcated profound respect to the gods, tended not to break the spirit, or to repress the courage, of their warlike votaries. The ancient heroes addressed their heavenly protectors in an erect posture, with the unfeigned sincerity of manly freedom. They expected to avert the calamities threatened by the anger of their divinities, not by inflicting on themselves such tortures as could be acceptable only to the mean resentment of weak and wicked beings, but by repairing the wrongs which they had committed against their fellow citizens, or compensating, by new attentions, for the neglect shown to the ceremonies of their national worship. In *their* estimation, the doing of injuries to men, and the omitting of prayer to the gods, were the principal causes of the divine displeasure; the incurring of which, being justly considered as infinitely greater than all other misfortunes, they were solicitous to avert it, not only by an exact performance of external rites, but by a diligent practice of moral duties. The dangerous power of oracles, the abused privileges of asylums, the wild raptures of prophetic enthusiasm, the abom-

* See *Iliad*, iv. ver. 35. *Iliad*, xxii. ver. 347. *Iliad*, xxiv. ver. 212.

† *Homer*, *passim*.

inable ceremonies of the Bacchanalia, and the horrid practice of human sacrifice, circumstances which cover with deserved infamy the later periods of paganism, were all unknown to the good sense and purity of the heroic ages; nor is there to be discovered the smallest vestige of any of these wild or wicked inventions, either in the writings of Homer, or of his contemporary Hesiod.

The amiable simplicity of their religious system was communicated to the civil and military institutions of the Greeks, to the laws of nations as well as to the regulations of internal policy, and to the various duties of domestic as well as of social life. The sentiments of natural reason, supported by the supposed sanction of Divine authority, generally directed the conduct of men in the wide variety of these complicated relations; and from one great and luminous principle, deeply impressed on the mind, there resulted an uniform system of unaffected propriety of conduct, the contemplation of which will always be agreeable to every taste that is not perverted by the false delicacy of artificial manners, or the illiberal prejudices of national vanity. In order to give the clearer explanation of the several parts of this beautiful system, we shall examine the political, the civil, and the domestic condition of the Greeks; that is, the relation of the governors, to the governed, and of the governed to each other, whether considered as subjects of the same state, or as branches of the same family. We shall combine the effect of these relations with that of the ordinary occupations and favourite amusements of this celebrated people, and from the whole endeavour to deduce the general estimate of their virtues and defects, of their happiness and misery.

The common observation, that power follows property, though not altogether correct,* affords perhaps the best succedaneum to written laws, for determining the real strength and influence of the different members of society. If we examine by this rule the

Political state of the Greeks during the heroic ages.

* The same property possessed by one, or by a few, confers much greater political consideration and influence, than it would confer, if diffused among the multitude.

policies of the heroic ages, we shall find that they deserve the title of republics, rather than that of monarchies. When a warlike tribe sallied from its woods and mountains, to take possession of a more fertile territory, the soldiers fought and conquered, not for their leaders, but for themselves.* The land acquired by their united valour was considered as a common property. It was cultivated by the joint labour and assiduity of all the members of the tribe, who assembled at a public table, celebrated together their religious rites, and, at the end of harvest, received their due shares of the annual produce of the ground, for the maintenance of their respective families.† Superior opulence gave not to one a title to despise another, nor was there any distinction known among them, but what was occasioned by the difference of personal merit and abilities. This difference, however, had naturally raised a chief or leader to the head of each society: the frequent necessity of employing his valour, or his wisdom, rendered his merit conspicuous and more useful; and his superior usefulness was rewarded by the gratitude of his tribe, with a valuable portion of ground,‡ separated from the common property. This was cultivated, not by the hands of his martial followers, who laboured only for the community, but by the captives taken in war, of whom a considerable portion were always bestowed on the general.¶ Being accustomed to command in the field, and to direct the measures, as well as to decide the quarrels, of his associates, he naturally became the judge of their civil differences; and, as the peculiar favour of the gods always accompanied superior virtue, he was also invested with the honourable office of presiding in their religious solemnities. These important functions of priest, judge, and general, which had naturally been conferred on the best and bravest character of each

* The Odyssey furnishes innumerable proofs of the limited power of kings. Ulysses, on most occasions, puts himself on an equal footing with his followers. It is commonly decided by lot, whether he shall be one of those who undertake any adventure attended with fatigue and danger. *Odyss. passim.*

† Isocrat in Archidam.

‡ Iliad, l. xii. v. 310.

¶ In the description of the shield of Achilles, Homer clearly distinguishes the domain of the king from the land of the community. *Iliad, xviii. ver. 542.*

particular tribe, were, upon the union of several tribes into one state, or nation, conferred on the best and bravest of all the different leaders. Before the various states of Greece had united in a general confederacy, the resources derived from the domains appropriated to the prince (which unless there was some particular reason to the contrary, were transmitted to his descendants) had enabled the several kings and leaders to extend their influence and authority. Their comparative power and splendour depended not entirely on the merit of personal abilities, but resulted in part from the extent and value of their possessions: and Agamemnon was appointed to the command of combined Greece, as much on account of his superior opulence, as of his many princely qualities.* But whether we examine the pre-eminence that Agamemnon enjoyed over the other princes of the confederacy, which is fully explained in the *Iliad*, or the authority with which each prince was invested in his own dominions, which is clearly illustrated in the *Odyssey*, or the influence of a warlike chief over the several members of his tribe, which we have already endeavoured to delineate, we shall every where discover the limited power of kings, and the mild moderation of mixed government. As in the general confederacy, the council† of princes regulated the resolves of the monarch, and the voice of the assembly‡ ruled that of the council; so in each particular kingdom, the decisions of the senate prevailed over the will of the prince, and the acknowledged majesty of the people,§ controlled the decisions of the senate.¶ If we descend still lower, we shall find the same distribution of power in every particular village, which afforded a picture,¶¶

* Thucyd. l. i.

† In matters of importance Agamemnon is generally determined by the council of chiefs, many of whom, on various occasions treat him with little respect.

‡ It is referred to the general assembly, whether it would be better to return to Greece, or to prosecute the siege of Troy. *Iliad*, ii. ver. 110. See also *Arist. Ethic.* l. iii. c. 5.

§ Several of the nobles of Ithaca even aspired to the crown. *Odyss.* 21.

¶ In the *Odyssey*, Telemachus threatens to appeal to the public assembly, of the injustice of the suitors, among whom were the principal nobles of Ithaca.

¶¶ Plutarch in *Theseo.* *Odyss.* *ibid.*

in miniature, of a kingdom, while a kingdom itself afforded a similar picture of the whole confederacy.

Their civil regulations. The same simplicity which regulated the political system, maintained the civil rights of the Greeks. As the price of submitting to the restraints of government, a man was secured in the enjoyment of his life and property;* his moveables were equally divided, at his death, among his descendants; and the unnatural right of primogeniture, which, in order to enrich the eldest son, reduces the rest of the family to want and misery, was altogether unknown to the equal spirit of the Grecian institutions.† Causes respecting property were decided by the first magistrate, or by judges of delegated authority. The prosecution of murderers belonged to the relations of the deceased; they might accept a compensation in money for the loss which the family had sustained;‡ but if this was not tendered them by the criminal, or their resentment was too violent to admit of any such composition, they were entitled to the assistance of all the members of their tribe, who either punished the murderer by death, or compelled him to leave the society.‖ These usages, doubtless, prove the ideas of the Greeks, concerning criminal jurisdiction, to have been very rude and imperfect: but this disadvantage was in some measure compensated by their ignorance of those legal cruelties which in civilized nations are too frequently exercised, under the specious pretence of justice. “In later times,” says Thucydides, “punishments became more severe, but crimes were not, on this account, less frequent.” The powerful or wealthy offender (he might have added) frequently eluded the vengeance of those severe laws; whereas, in the

* Iliad. xii. Pind. Pyth. Od. iv.

† Odys. xiv. If there were no children, the nearest relations by the father's side divided the moveable property: *αποφθιμενον δε δια πτησιν δαιονται κληρωςαι*. Hesiod. Theogn. The same observation is made by Homer, Iliad, v.; but there is no mention of succession to land or immoveable property.

‡ Iliad, ix. Ajax blames the obstinacy of Achilles, who refuses such compensation for an affront, as a man sometimes accepted for the murder of a son or a brother.

‖ There are examples of this in the 14th, 15th, and 23d, Iliad.

heroic ages, there was not any respect of persons, princes themselves being subject to the same moderate penalties,* which were justly inflicted on their offending subjects.

The perfection of civil and political institutions, which was produced in Greece by the influence of religion, is found in most countries to be proportional to their improvements in arts, and their attainments in knowledge; while the happy effects of domestic union are frequently most conspicuous among rude and simple nations. The reciprocal duties of the governor and governed, as well as the mutual obligations of subjects, are gradually unfolded and enlarged by the progressive ideas of utility; but the tender connexions of husband and wife, of father and son, of brothers and kinsmen, excite, without reflection, the warmest feelings of the heart, and at once inspire the affectionate sentiments of love and friendship, of kindness and gratitude. The dictates of nature alone sufficiently maintain the duties which correspond to the several relations of blood; her voice is strong and positive in asserting *their* obligation; and there is greater danger that these sacred ties should be weakened, or perverted, by the artificial refinements of polished life, than that their influence should continue altogether unknown, or be feebly felt, in the early periods of society.

Agreeably to these observations, we find in the history of the heroic ages, the most interesting pictures of conjugal love, of parental affection, and of filial duty. These sentiments, suggested by nature, and confirmed by reason, were still farther strengthened by the precepts of religion; and their force, thus augmented, became so strong and irresistible, that it can scarcely be conceived by men, among whom fashion, and vanity, and interest, have usurped the place of more generous and manly principles.

The comforts of a family were anciently considered as equal

* Thus Midon, the brother of Ajax, was obliged to fly to Phylacè, II. xv. Patroclus, for a similar offence, took refuge with the father of Achilles, II. 23. Pausanias (in Eliac.) gives examples of the same kind in two kings of the Ætolians; and these facts are agreeable to the nature of the kingly office in the heroic ages, as described by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, I. ii. Hist. Rom.

to the benefits derived from social union. To be destitute of the one was deemed no less miserable than to be deprived of the other; and the total baseness of a man's character was expressed by saying, that he deserved not to enjoy the rights of a citizen, the protection of a subject, or the happiness of domestic life.*

Marriage. Marriage was a necessary step in order to attain this happiness, and the institution of marriage was ascribed by remote tradition to the bounty of the gods. The Greeks of the heroic ages, among whom the rights of weakness and beauty were as warmly protected as they afterwards were shamelessly insulted by their degenerate descendants, celebrated the conjugal union with all the pomp of religious festivity. The joyous band, carrying the nuptial torches, marched in pomp through the city, to the sound of the hymeneal song;† the lustral waters were drawn from the sacred fountain Calliroe, and many revered ceremonies rendered the connexion of husband and wife equally respectable and binding.‡

Adultery was considered as a crime of the blackest dye, and is always mentioned with the same horror as murder. Persons guilty of these atrocious enormities purchased impunity;§ and more frequently escaped death, by voluntary banishment; but in many cases they were punished by the united vengeance of the tribe which had received the injury. Second nuptials were not absolutely forbidden: but so strong and sacred was the matrimonial tie, that even the death of one of the parties was scarcely thought sufficient to dissolve it; and the survivor, by entering into a new connexion, suffered a diminution of fame, and submitted to a considerable degradation of character.¶

Rank of wo- Two circumstances chiefly have rendered it difficult to explain the rank and condition of women in the heroic ages. The Greek word denoting a wife, is

* *Ἀφρητῶρ ἀθεμίζος ἀνεῖνος ἐστὶ ἐκείνος.* Iliad, passim. † Iliad, l. xxiii.

‡ Thucydides, l. ii. Meursius *Feræ Græcæ*, and the authors there cited.

§ Odyss. viii.

¶ Penelope was restrained from marrying a second husband: *αἰδομένη ἐννῆν ποσειδῶς, δημῶν τε φημιν.* Il. xv.

borrowed from a quality which equally applies to a concubine, and the same term is used indifferently to express both. But the women who in ancient Greece submitted to the infamy of prostitution, were generally captives taken in war who were reduced by the cruel right of arms to the miserable condition of servitude. Hence it has been erroneously inferred, that in ancient Greece, wives as well as concubines were the slaves of their husbands. This mistaken notion it has been attempted to confirm, not only by insisting on the humiliating condition of the fair sex in the later ages of Greece, but by expressly asserting, that, in ancient times, they were purchased by their husbands.* But this is to support one error by another. Before entering into the state of wedlock, it was customary for a man to make a mutual exchange of presents with his intended father-in-law. The Greeks had a particular term to express the present which he bestowed, as well as that which he received.† The former, which has no exact equivalent in the modern languages, is translated by the more general word “price,” which has given rise to the false notion of the purchase and servitude of women; but the latter, which may with propriety be translated “dower,”‡ was given as a provision for the wife, both during marriage and after its dissolution,|| and was sufficient to deliver her from that supposed state of dependence on the husband, which never had any existence but in the imagination of the systematic writers of the present age.

In the modern countries of Europe, women are generally excluded from the serious occupations of life, but admitted to an equal share in its gayest amusements. During the heroic ages, they were not absolutely debarred from the former, although it was impossible to associate their natural delicacy and timidity to the warlike labours and pleasures which formed the principal employments of their husbands. The intercourse between the sexes, therefore, was less frequent and general, than would suit the refined softness of modern manners.

* Lord Kaimes' Sketches, Thomas sur la condition des Femmes, &c.

† *Εδνα* and *προίξ*,

‡ *Προίξ*.

|| Odyss. ii. Telemachus says, that if his mother should be sent from the house, he would be obliged to restore her dower to her father Icarius.

Their occupations and amusements.

The attention of women was chiefly confined to domestic cares or to the practice of such arts as required neither strength, nor courage, nor wisdom, but only the patient exertions of mechanical dexterity.* Our natural respect for the honour of the sex is offended at hearing them as much extolled for their skill in the labours of the loom, as for their beauty and virtue; but we must take into consideration that weaving and embroidery being, like all other arts, less extensively diffused in Greece than in improved commercial countries, were on this account more highly valued, and therefore better adapted to confer distinction on those who excelled in them. They were practised by females of the highest rank, and even by queens, who also thought it an honour to be entrusted with the education of their children till they became fit for the society of their fathers.† Besides these employments, the women were permitted to join in celebration of religious rites and ceremonies, and many of them were consecrated to the service of particular divinities.‡ In the seasons of public festivity, they mixed more freely than on ordinary occasions in the society of the other sex. This was sometimes attended with such inconveniences as might naturally be expected to arise in consequence of the usual restraints imposed on their behaviour. “The beautiful Poly-mela,” says Homer,|| “dancing in the chorus of Diana, was embraced by Mercury; but she had no sooner brought forth a son, than one of the principal citizens offered her his hand.” The institutions of the heroic ages promoted, with admirable propriety, the modest reserve of women, while they permitted not one unfortunate error to cover an amiable character with indelible infamy. The crime of having too tender an heart was not deemed inexpiable; and, as the consequences of female weakness were imputed to the affectionate ardour of some amorous divinity, they were so far from obscuring the charms

* Homer, *passim*.

† Thus, Thetis educated Achilles. Hesiod says poetically, that in the age of silver, the children continued, during an infancy of an hundred years, under the care of their mothers.

‡ Theano was priestess of Vulcan, &c. *Iliad*.

| *Iliad*, xvi.

of beauty, that they adorned it with new graces and more conspicuous splendour.

The simplicity of the ancient Greeks was equally ^{Conjugal} remote from the cruel tyranny of savages, which ^{love.} condemns women to servitude, and the interested refinement of luxury and vice, which regards them as mere instruments of pleasure. The natural equality between the sexes, suggested by the voice of sentiment, asserted by the dictates of reason, and confirmed by the precepts of religion, produced the most delicate affections that can inspire a susceptible heart: hence those moving scenes so admirably delineated by Homer, which retrace the most perfect image of domestic felicity; hence those pleasing pains, those anxious solitudes of tenderness and love, which frequently degenerate into melancholy presages of the loss of an union to which nothing was wanting but that it should prove immortal.*

The sentiments of parental affection were proportionably strong and ardent with those of conjugal ^{Parental} love. The mutual tenderness of the husband and wife was ^{affection.} communicated to their offspring; while the father viewed in his child the sweet charms of its mother, and the mother perceived in it the manly graces of its father. Independently of the delicacy of sentiments, there are, doubtless, in all countries, savage and civilized, innumerable instances of paternal kindness, which, indeed, is the most simple and natural ^{Duties of} expansion of self-love. But in the heroic ages alone, ^{children.} we find sincere and complete returns of filial duty. In the lowest state of savage life, men are, for the most part, little acquainted with this respectful affection: they fear and obey, but without any mixture of love, those who are wiser and stronger than themselves. When they become wise and strong in their turn, they disregard the trembling hand that reared their tender years, or if any faint emotions of gratitude are feebly felt, they discover them in the preposterous kindness of delivering their aged parents from what appears to their own

* See the interview of Hector and Andromache, and other examples. Iliad, ix. and Odyss. vi.

juvenile impatience, the wretched load of life.* Among nations, on the other hand, who are sunk in the corruptions incident to excessive luxury and refinement, the ties of nature are perverted or effaced ; the young despise the admonitions, and avoid the company of the aged ; and the duties as well as the business of society, are degraded into a miserable traffic of interest or pleasure. But as the Greeks had emerged from the melancholy gloom of the first situation, and had not yet declined into the foul vapours of the second, they displayed the meridian splendour of the domestic virtues.† The reverence of children for their parents approached their veneration for the gods. The most violent and impetuous heroes submitted, without reluctance, to the severest dictates of paternal authority. In such delicate concerns as might seem to affect themselves alone, they relinquished their favourite inclinations, disavowed any will of their own, and committed their dearest concerns to the experienced wisdom and known goodness of their fathers. The amiable expressions of filial respect were extended into a more general sentiment of regard for the infirm and aged. Even among brothers who were nearly of the same age, the younger was obliged to yield in every instance to the elder ; and it was an acknowledged principle of religion, that the Furies defended by their stern authority, the sacred rights of superior years.‡

The occupations of the ancient Greeks, whether of war or peace, were, for the most part, directed by the same sacred influence which governed their behaviour in the various relations of domestic and social life. War was their principal employment ; and in the field they both displayed their noblest qualities, and discovered the greatest defects of their character. They were unacquainted with those disciplined evolutions which give harmony and concert to numerous bodies

Occupations of the Greeks during the heroic ages.

State of the military art among them.

* Voyage du Pere Charlevoix. Lafitau Mœurs des Sauvages.

† There is, perhaps, no other language that can express, without a circumlocution, what the Greeks meant by *θεμετα*, the obligations of children to repay the maintenance, the education, and the tender cares of their parents.

‡ *Προσφύστερος σπινυες αλευ εντοται*. Homer, *passim*.

of men, and enable whole armies to move with the activity and address of single combatants. What was wanting in skill they supplied by courage. They marched to the field in a deep phalanx, rushed impetuously to the attack, and bravely closed with their enemies. Each warrior was firmly buckled with his antagonist, and compelled by necessity to the same exertions of valour, as if the fortune of the day had depended upon his single arm. Their principal weapon was the spear, resembling the Roman pilum, which, thrown by the nervous and well-directed vigour of a steady hand, often penetrated the firmest shields and bucklers. When they missed their aim, or when the stroke proved ineffectual through want of force, they drew their swords, and summoning their utmost resolution, darted impetuously on the foe. This mode of war was common to the soldiers and generals, the latter being as much distinguished in the day of action by their strength and courage, as by their skill and conduct. The Greeks had bows, and slings, and darts, intended for the practice of distant hostility ; but the use of these weapons, which were much employed in the military pastimes of the heroic ages, was confined in the field to warriors of inferior renown.* Their defensive armour was remarkably complete: a bright helmet, adorned with plumes, covered the head and face, a firm corslet defended the breast, greaves of brass descended to the feet, and an ample shield loosely attached to the shoulders, turned in all directions, and opposed its firm resistance to every hostile assault.

The close compact combats of the Greeks, were fitted to excite the most furious passions of the heart, and to embitter national animosity by personal hatred and revenge. A battle consisted of so many duels, which exasperated to the utmost the hostility of the contending parties ; each soldier knew the antagonist from whom he had received, or on whom he had inflicted the severest sufferings. They fought with all the keenness of resentment, and often sullied the honours of victory by those licentious cruel-

The effect of their military regulations on manners.

* Teucer is more than once upbraided in the Iliad as a vain archer.

ties which are too natural to men in the giddy moment of triumph over a detested adversary.

It is partly to this unfortunate circumstance, and partly to the ancient mode of appropriating the warlike plunder to those who first acquired it, that we are to ascribe the shocking enormities which were sometimes committed by the bravest and most generous of the Grecian chiefs.

Laws of
war.

That the severities exercised towards the conquered, proceeded not from the barbarism of the age, and an ignorance of the rights of humanity, is plain from the observances deemed necessary, in order to obtain the favour of the gods, in carrying on any military expedition, or in enjoying the fruits of victory. These observances, which were confirmed by the laws of nations among the Greeks, were practised before the commencement of hostilities, during their continuance, and after their conclusion. Before any war could be lawfully undertaken, it was necessary to despatch ambassadors, who might explain the injury that had been done, demand reparation or atonement, and if this was refused, denounce in form the resolution of their community to prosecute its claim by force of arms.* After they had begun to execute their fatal purpose, the characters of heralds, those sacred ministers of kings, were equally respected by friends and foes. They travelled in safety through the midst of embattled hosts, proclaimed to the silent warriors the commissions with which they were entrusted, or demanded a truce for burying the dead, which could not be refused without enormous impiety.† The use of poisoned weapons‡ was forbidden, under pain of the divine displeasure. It was agreeable to the will of the gods that the life should be spared, when a sufficient ransom was promised.|| And after a treaty of peace was concluded between hostile nations, without any apparent ratification but the honour of the contracting parties, the perfidious wretches who betrayed the sanctity of their engagements, were

* See chap. i. p. 43.

† Homer, *passim*.

‡ Ilus refused Ulysses poisoned arrows, since he revered the immortal gods.

Επει νεμεσίζετο θεους αμεν εοντας. Odyss.

|| Iliad, i. Ibid. vi. 24.

devoted, amidst solemn sacrifices and libations, to the fury of the terrible goddesses.*

From the arts of peace, the Greeks had acquired the necessaries, and procured the accommodations, but had not obtained the luxuries, of life. Pasturage and agriculture supplied them with the most indispensable articles of food, and with the principal materials of clothing. The implements of husbandry were extremely imperfect; the plough itself, the most useful of them all, being composed entirely of wood;† which arose rather from the scarcity of iron, than from any defect of mechanical ingenuity.‡ They employed in the time of Hesiod, the invention of shears for depriving the sheep of their wool, having formerly waited the season of its annual separation by nature.¶ Barley was the principal produce of their fields, and furnished the ordinary food both of men and of horses. The invention of mills was unknown, and the grain underwent several tedious operations, in order to facilitate the bruising of it between two large stones with the hand.§ Although the Greeks cultivated the olive, they were unacquainted with the benefit derived from the fruit of this plant, so well adapted to cheer the melancholy gloom of night,¶ The Grecian soil was naturally favourable to the grape, but the long and operose process by which the juice of it was separated and prepared, rendered wine scarce and dear.**

Of the mechanic arts, weaving was the best understood; yet this, as well as all the other employments, qualified by the appellation of sedentary, were practised by the Greeks standing upright;‡ which seems to indicate an imperfect state of improvement. The hatchet, wimble, plane, and level, are the tools mentioned by Homer, who appears to

* Iliad, iii.

† Hesiod, Oper. & Dies.

‡ Homer, passim.

¶ Hesiod, ibid.

§ Plin. l. xviii. c. xiv.

¶ The Greeks had not discovered any other contrivance for that purpose, than the burning of great fires of wood. The torches mentioned by Homer consisted of branches of any resinous tree, split at the end, and lighted at the fire. Odyss. l. vi. ver. 307, l. xviii. ver. 306. & ver. 309.

** Odyss. l. vii. ver. 122.

‡ Eustach. in Iliad. i. ver 31.

have been unacquainted with the saw, the square, and the compass.* The art of cutting marble, which afterwards furnished Grecian ingenuity with the materials of those inimitable productions which are still the wonder of the world, was as yet undiscovered; nor did the polished lustre of this valuable stone adorn the habitations of the Greeks.†

Fine arts. Homer mentions not the orders of architecture, which were invented in a later age; and pillars are the only ornaments assigned to the edifices which he describes. The houses of the great were surrounded by a wall, and consisted of two floors; the lower of which was distributed into four apartments, which we have translated by the names of hall,‡ portico, antichamber, and bedchamber, words expressing the same relative situation, rather than any other point of resemblance. The roofs were flat, and the doors opened towards the surrounding wall, while the gates of the wall itself opened towards the road or street.¶ The invention of enamelled metals had been cultivated with singular success; and though painting, properly so called, was rude and unformed during the age of Homer, the genius of the divine poet has described the rudiments of his kindred art with such graces as would adorn its most refined state of

Painting. Painting. The invention of enamelled metals had been cultivated with singular success; and though painting, properly so called, was rude and unformed during the age of Homer, the genius of the divine poet has described the rudiments of his kindred art with such graces as would adorn its most refined state of

* Odyss. l. v. ver. 234, &c.

† In the palace of Alcinous, which shone with gold, silver, brass, and amber, there is no mention of marble. Odyss. l. iv. ver. 72.

‡ Ἡ ταῖς οὐτως; ἐρκος περὶ οὐ πλά. μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἐρκιον αὐλῇ, μετὰ ἣν, αἰθουσα, οὐ προδομος, καὶ θαλαμος. Pollux Onomast.

¶ Odyss. l. i. ver. 441.

§ The nobler kinds of painting are all illustrated in the shield of Achilles; and each picture discovers a wonderful degree of *invention*, *expression*, and *composition*. Iliad, xviii. Perrault and Terrasson, who thought it impossible to place so many pictures in the circumference of a shield, were answered by Boivin, who supposed a great many concentric circles. This opinion was adopted by Pope, who pretends that all the branches of painting, even aerial perspective, may be found in Homer's shield. "That he was no stranger to aerial perspective, appears from his expressly marking the distance from object to object," &c. But this observation only proves that Pope, who practised painting, was little acquainted with the theory of that art; since aerial perspective has nothing to do with the diminution of objects in proportion

perfection. Music was much practised among the Music.
 early Greeks. It was not of the learned kind, and
 therefore the better adapted to touch the heart. The effects
 ascribed to it are wonderful, but not incredible, because the
 ancient music was not merely an agreeable succession of har-
 monious, insignificant sounds, but an imitation and a height-
 ening of the simple, natural, and pathetic tones and cadences
 of a beautiful and expressive language.*

In the heroic ages men had neither leisure nor in- Sciences
 clination to attend to the speculative sciences. All
 the knowledge that they possessed or esteemed was of the prac-
 tical kind. From arithmetic they learned such simple calcula-
 tions as suited the narrow sphere of their transactions. Astro-
 nomy taught them to observe the constellations most necessary
 to direct the adventurous course of the mariner; but their
 navigation was still so imperfect that they seldom abandoned
 the coasts; and the only stars mentioned by Homer are the
 Great and Little Bear, the Pleiades, the Hyades, Orion and
 the Dog Star. The metaphysics, ethics, and politics of the
 ancient Greeks have been explained under the article of reli-
 gion, from which they were originally derived, and with which
 they long continued to be inseparably connected. Education.
 The main objects proposed in the education of the
 young warriors were, that they should learn to excel in the
 military exercises of the age, especially those of throwing the
 lance and of driving the chariot, and to command the atten-

tion to their distance, and relates entirely to the changing and weakening of co-
 lours, according to the condition of the medium through which they are
 seen. The objections of Perrault and Terrasson, and the concentric circles
 of Boivin, are equally frivolous. The shield of Homer contains, in fact, but
 ten pictures. The enumeration by the particles $\mu\upsilon\upsilon$ and $\delta\epsilon$ fixes the number.
 But the poet not only describes these ten pictures actually represented on
 the shield, but also mentions their antecedents and consequents. This is the
 chief superiority of poetical imitation above painting, that it can describe, in
 a few pages, what many galleries of pictures could not represent. But of this
 more hereafter.

* *Odys.* iii. ver. 267, & passim. This subject will be treated fully here-
 after.

tion of the senate, or assembly, by delivering their opinion in a perspicuous, elegant, and manly style.*

Ordinary amusements of the Greeks during the heroic ages.

It was not only in the council and in the field that these superior accomplishments solicited and obtained their well-merited rewards. Each community presented, in time of peace, the picture of a large family. The Greeks lived in continual society with their equals, enjoyed common pleasures and amusements, and had daily opportunities of displaying their useful talents in the sight of their fellow-citizens. The frequent disputes between individuals occasioned litigations and trials, which furnished employment for the eloquence and ability of men, in the necessary defence of their friends. The funeral games and those celebrated in commemoration of several important events, both of a civil and sacred kind, opened a continual source of entertainment. There the young and vigorous contended in the rapid race; wielded the massy cæstus or ponderous quoit; and exerted equal efforts of strength and skill in the other manly exercises which confirm the vigour of the body, and the fortitude of the mind. Nor were the aged and infirm allowed to languish for want of proper objects to rouse their emulation, to flatter their pride, and to employ their remaining activity. It belonged to them to offer their wise counsels, to interpose their respected authority, and to decide the quarrels, as well as to determine the merit, of the young candidates for fame. The applause and rewards bestowed on him whose counsels and decisions were most generally approved, consoled the weakness of his declining years, while his rivals, though disappointed for the present, expected, on some future occasion, to obtain the same honourable marks of the public esteem.†

Estimate of the Grecian manners and character during the heroic ages.

After this general review of the Grecian manners and institutions, should we endeavour to estimate their value, they would probably rise in our esteem, on comparison, either with the rude customs of savage life, or with the artificial refinements of polished society. The Greeks had advanced beyond that

* Μυθῶν τε ρητῶν' ἐμεναι' προηέτηρα τε ἔργων.

† Iliad, xviii. Ibid. xxiii.

uniform insipidity of deportment, that sullen ferocity of manners, and that hardened insensibility of heart, which universally characterize the savage state. They still possessed, however, that patient intrepidity, that noble spirit of independence, that ardent attachment to their friends, and that generous contempt of pain, and danger, and death, which render the description of the wild tribes of America so interesting to a philosophic mind. Of two principal enjoyments of life, study and conversation, they were little acquainted, indeed, with the consolations and pleasures of the first, the want of which was compensated, by the sincerity, the confidence, the charms of the second. Their social affections were less comprehensive in their objects, but more powerful in their effects, than those of polished nations. A generous chief rushes to certain death, to revenge the cause of his friend; yet refuses to the prayers of an aged parent the melancholy consolation of interring the remains of his favourite son; till the corresponding image of his own father strikes his mind, and at once melts him to pity.* The imaginary wants and artificial passions which are so necessary to urge the hand of industry, and to vary the pursuits of men, in improved commercial societies, were supplied to the Greeks by that excessive sensibility, which interested them so deeply in the affairs of their community, their tribe, their family, and their friends, and which connected them by the feelings of gratitude even with the inanimate objects of nature. As they were not acquainted with the same diversity of employments, so neither were they fatigued with the same giddy round of dissipated pleasures which augment the splendid misery of later times. Though ignorant of innumerable arts which adorn the present age, they had discovered one of inestimable value, to render the great duties of life its most entertaining amusement. It will not, perhaps, be easy to point out a nation who united a more complete subordination to established authority with a higher sense of personal independence, and a more respectful regard to the

* *Iliad*, xxiv.

dictates of religion with a more ardent spirit of martial enterprise. The generous equality of their political establishments, and their fancied intercourse with the gods, conspired to raise them to a certain elevation of character which will be for ever remembered and admired. This character was rendered permanent in Sparta, by the famous laws commonly ascribed to the invention of Lycurgus, but which, as will appear in the subsequent chapter, were almost exact copies of the customs and institutions that universally prevailed in Greece during the heroic ages.

CHAP. III.

Distracted State of Greece.—The Heracleidæ conduct the Dorians into Peloponnesus.—Divide their Conquests in that Peninsula.—The Eolic, Ionic, and Doric Migrations.—Establishment of Colonies in Thrace, Macedon, Africa, and Magna Græcia.—Influence of the Ionic Colonies in Asia on the Affairs of the Mother Country.—The abolition of Monarchy in Greece.—New Disorders in that country.—Four Institutions which tended to remove them.—The Amphictyonic Council.—The Oracle of Delphi.—The Olympic Games.—The Spartan Laws.

GREECE triumphed over Troy, but it was a melancholy triumph. The calamities of war were followed by disasters at sea, by discord among the chiefs, by ruin to the confederacy; yet these evils were less afflicting than the intestine animosities and sedition excited by the license of the people, and fomented by the ambition of the nobles during the long and unfortunate absence of their kings. The victorious Agamemnon had scarcely set foot on his native land, when he was cut off by an adulterous spouse and a perfidious assassin.* His son Orestes found protection in Athens against the resentment of an usurper. In the eighth year of his exile he returned with his partisans, and took just vengeance on the abominable Egystheus and Clytemnestra.† He reigned in Argos, but with far less glory than his father; nor did that kingdom ever thenceforth assume its ancient pre-eminence.

The wanderings and woes of Ulysses are too well known to be described.‡ His patient fortitude regained the kingdom of Ithaca, but not without

State of
Greece af-
ter the Tro-
jan war.

Weakness
of that coun-
try during
the four

* Odyss. l. i. ver. 29.

† Odyss. l. iii. ver. 196. and ver. 305, & seq.

‡ Odyss. passim.

succeeding centuries.
From A. C. 1184, till 776.

wading through the blood of his most illustrious subjects.* If history minutely recorded the domestic feuds which prevailed in other states, it would probably exhibit a disgusting picture of fraud and cruelty, and a continual repetition of similar crimes and calamities would equally fatigue the attention, and offend the humanity, of the modern reader. But though it would be neither entertaining nor useful to describe the particular and transitory consequences of these disorders, it is of importance to remark their general and lasting tendency to prolong the weakness of Greece; whose obscure transactions, during the four following centuries, ill correspond with the splendour of the Trojan, or even of the Argonautic expedition.

History of that period obscure.

The history of this long period is very confusedly and imperfectly related by ancient authors, and the chronology is throughout very inaccurately ascertained; yet such events as are either interesting in themselves, or had any permanent influence on the memorable ages of Greece, which form the subject of the present work, may be clearly explained, and reduced to a narrow compass. . In order

Division of the subject.

to preserve an unbroken narrative, we must consider three series of events, which naturally followed each other, and which all pointed to the same goal.

In this view, we shall first examine the migrations of different tribes or communities within the narrow bounds of Greece; secondly, the establishment of new colonies in many distant parts of Europe, as well as of Asia and Africa; and, thirdly, the internal changes produced in the several states, by their adoption, almost universally, of the republican, instead of the monarchical form of government.† In the fluctuation of these commotions, we must then seek for the seeds of order and stability, and endeavour to trace, amidst extensive migrations, general revolutions, and unceasing hostilities, the origin and improvement of those singular institutions which tended to unite, to polish, and to adorn the scattered and still spreading branches of the Grecian race through every part of the world.

* Odyss. l. xxii. ver. 290, & seq.

† Velleius Patercul. l. i.

The migrations, which soon followed the Trojan expedition, are mentioned, but not explained, by historians. Their general cause may be discovered in Homer, whose poems, no less instructive than agreeable, can alone enable us to travel with equal security and pleasure in the dark regions of Grecian antiquity. Domestic dissension, and, still more, the unsettled tenure of landed property, as described by that immortal poet, naturally engaged the Grecian tribes, notwithstanding their acquaintance with agriculture, often to change their respective habitations. The idea of a separate property in land is the principal tie which binds men to particular districts. The avarice of individuals is unwilling to relinquish the fields, which it has been the great object of their industry to cultivate and to adorn, and their pride is averse to a separation from their hereditary establishments. These passions, which cover the black heaths and inhospitable mountains of the north with fair and populous cities, while far more inviting regions of the earth still remain destitute of inhabitants, could not have much influence on a people, who regarded land as the property of the public, rather than of individuals. In such a nation, men are connected with the territory which they inhabit, only as members of a particular community, and when exposed to any slight inconvenience at home, or allured by fairer prospects from abroad, they issue forth with one accord to acquire, by their united valour, more secure or more agreeable settlements. Governed by motives of this kind, a tribe of Bœotians, soon after the Trojan war, seized the rich vale of Thessalian Arné. The same restless spirit urged a warlike band of Thessalians to quit the seats of their ancestors. The new emigrants poured down with resistless violence on the unprepared Bœotians, who were thus reluctantly compelled, sixty years after the taking of Troy, to rejoin their brethren in the ancient kingdom of Cadmus.*

Migrations of the Hellenic tribes or communities in the north of Greece.

A. C. 1124.

The descendants of Hercules

Twenty years after this event, a more extensive migration totally changed the affairs of the Peloponnesus.

* Thucyd. i. i. p. 9 & 10. Diodor. i. iv. Strabo, i. ix. p. 630. Pausan. i. ix. c. 40.

conduct the Dorians into the Peloponnesus. A. C. 1104. ponnesus; and, in its consequences, gave new inhabitants to the whole western coast of Asia Minor. The rival families of Perseus and Pelops anciently contended for the dominion of the Grecian peninsula.

The fortune of the Pelopidæ prevailed; but their superiority led them rather to persecute, than to forgive, their enemies. The descendants and partisans of the great Hercules, the most illustrious hero of the Perseid line, were divested of their possessions, and driven into banishment. The exiles were first received by the Athenians, whose more humane, or more enlarged policy, rendered Attica, ever since the reign of Theseus, the ordinary resource of the miserable.* Their leader Hyllus was afterwards adopted by Epalius, the aged king of Doris; and the death of their benefactor soon made the Heracleidæ masters of that mountainous province.† But the wilds of Oeta and Parnassus were little fitted to satisfy men, whose ancestors had enjoyed far more valuable possessions. Their natural ambition was long repressed by the growing greatness of the Pelopidæ, and the glory of Agamemnon. After the unexpected disasters of that prince, they twice attempted, unsuccessfully, to break through the Corinthian isthmus, and to recover their ancient dominion in Argos and Lacedæmon.‡

Their auxiliaries in that enterprise. Instructed by past miscarriages, Temenus, Cresphontes, and Aristodemus, descendants in the fifth degree from Hercules, finally abandoned the hopeless design of entering the Peloponnesus by land. But determining to use every exertion for regaining their hereditary establishments, they set themselves, with great industry, to prepare transports in a convenient harbour, at the northern extremity of the Corinthian gulf, which, in consequence of this transaction, received, and thenceforth retained, the name of Naupactus. The warlike and rapacious Ætolians, whose leader Oxylus was nearly related to the family of Hercules, readily assisted their labours with a view to share the booty that might accrue from the expedition. The Dorians, who

* Lysias Orat. Funeb.

† Strabo, l. ix. p. 427.

‡ Herodot. l. ix. c. xxvi. Apollodor. l. iii. c. v. & vi.

inhabited the neighbourhood of Mount Pindus, cheerfully deserted the gloomy solitude of their woods, in order to seek possessions in a more agreeable and better cultivated country. Animated by these reinforcements, the Heracleidæ redoubled their diligence. All necessary preparations were made for the invasion: yet their confidence in arms excluded not the use of artifice. By secret intrigues they gained a party in Lacedæmon; and, before setting sail, they prudently detached a body of light armed troops, whose appearance at the Isthmus drew the strength of the enemy towards that quarter.* Meanwhile their armament was carried by a favourable gale towards the eastern coast of Peloponnesus. The Heracleidæ landed their followers without opposition, and assailed the defenceless territories to which they had long laid claim, comprehending the whole peninsula, except the central province of Arcadia, and the maritime district of Achaia. The five other provinces were conquered at the same time, though by different means. Laconia was betrayed to the invaders;† Argos acknowledged their authority; Corinth, Elis, and Messenia, submitted to their arms. The revolution was complete, and effected with little bloodshed, but not without great oppression of the ancient inhabitants, many of whom emigrated, and many were reduced into slavery.‡

They take possession of five provinces in that peninsula.

A. C. 1104.

The Heracleidæ, agreeably to the custom of that age, divided their new acquisitions by lot. The kingdom of Argos fell to the share of Temenus; Cresphontes obtained Messenia; and, as Aristodemus then happened to die, Laconia was set apart for his infant sons, the twin-brothers, Eurysthenes and Procles. Corinth was bestowed on their kinsman Aletes; and Elis given to Oxylus, their brave Ætolian ally.|| This distribution, however, referred only to the royal dignity, then extremely limited, and to an appropriate domain to the several princes in their respective

Division of their conquests.

* Pausan. l. ii. c. xviii.

† Strabo, l. viii. p. 365.

‡ Herodot. l. vi. c. lii. Polyb. l. ii. p. 178. Strabo, l. viii. p. 383. Pausan. Argolic. & Isocrat. Panathen.

|| Pausan. Ibid.

allotments. The rest of the territory was divided among the warlike Dorians and Ætolians, who had conquered for themselves, not for their leaders;* and who, having over-run, without opposition, the finest province of the Peloponnesus, could not willingly return to lead a life of hardship and misery on their native mountains.

Fate of the expelled princes of those countries. Before this important revolution, Argos and Lacedæmon were subject to Tisamenus, grandson of Agamemnon; Messenia was governed by Melanthus, a descendant of the venerated Nestor. These princes had not so far degenerated from the glory of their ancestors, as to submit to become subjects in the countries where they had long reigned. On the false first alarm of invasion, occasioned by the appearance of light troops at the Isthmus, Tisamenus and Melanthus had taken the field with the flower of the Argive and Messenian nations. But while they prepared to repel the expected inroads from the north, they received the melancholy intelligence that their kingdoms had been attacked on another side, on which they thought them secure. Instead of returning southward to dispossess the Heracleidæ, an enterprise too daring to afford any prospect of success, Tisamenus turned his arms against the Ionians, who inhabited the southern shore of the Corinthian gulf. An obstinate battle was fought, which proved fatal to Tisamenus; but his followers obtained a decisive victory, and, having expelled or enslaved the ancient inhabitants, took possession of that valuable province, so famous in later times under the name of Achaia. Melanthus enjoyed better fortune. Accompanied by his faithful Messenians, he resorted to Attica, then engaged in war with the neighbouring kingdom of Bœotia. The Bœotian prince proposed to decide the contest by single combat. Thymætēs, though descended from the heroic Theseus, declined the challenge. Melanthus accepted it, prevailed in the conflict, and the sceptre of the deposed Thymætēs was his reward.†

The followers of Tisamenus conquer Achaia.

Melanthus becomes king of Attica.

* Isocrat. in Archidam.

† Pausan & Strabo, *ibid.*

‡ Strabo l. ix. p. 393. Herodot. l. v. c. 65.

The fermentation occasioned in Greece by so many expulsions and migrations, expanded itself through the islands and coasts of Asia Minor. Many Peloponnesian fugitives, who beheld with indignation the calamities inflicted on their country, flocked to the standard of Penthilus,* a younger brother of Tisamenus, who had taken refuge in Eubœa. Others followed the banners of Cleues and Melaus,† also descendants of Agamemnon. The partisans of all these princes having unsuccessfully traversed the northern parts of Greece in quest of new settlements, finally yielded to the dictates of their enterprising spirit, crossed the Hellespont eighty-eight years after the taking of Troy, and established themselves along the shore of the ancient kingdom of Priam. They gradually diffused their colonies from Cyzicus on the Propontis to the mouth of the river Hermus;‡ which delightful country, together with the isle of Lesbos, thenceforth received the name of Eolis or Eolia, to denote that its inhabitants belonged to the Eolian branch of the Hellenic race.||

Consequences still more important resulted from the expulsion of the Achæans by the followers of Tisamenus. The ancient inhabitants of Achaia, being themselves Ionians, took refuge with their kinsmen in Attica. The Messenian fugitives under Melanthus had sought protection in the same country. The Athenians readily accepted these new accessions of strength, being inspired with a well-founded jealousy of the Dorian conquerors of Peloponnesus, whose ambition early produced that memorable rivalry between the Doric and Ionic race, which subsisted to the latest times of the Grecian republics.§ In the reign of Codrus, son of Melanthus, the Dorians had already encroached on the Athenian frontier, and seized the territory of Megara, on the northern coast of the Saronic gulf.¶ Issuing from their strong holds in that rocky district, from which it was long impossible to dislodge them,

* Strabo, l. ix. p. 402.

† Idem. *ibid.* & Herodot. l. i. c. 151.

§ Herodot. Thucyd. & Diod. *passim*.

† Idem. l. xiii. p. 582, & seq.

¶ Herodot. l. i. c. cli.

¶ Strabo. l. ix. p. 393.

they harassed the Athenians in a cruel war, concerning which a superstitious rumour prevailed, that they should finally remain conquerors, provided they abstained from injuring the

person of the Athenian king. Codrus, hearing the report, was inspired with the spirit of heroism congenial to his family. Disguising himself in the habit of a peasant, he proceeded to the quarters of the enemy; insulted a Dorian soldier; a combat ensued; Codrus fell;* his body was recognised; and the superstitious

Peleponnesians, now despairing of success, suspended their hostilities. The inimitable merit of a prince, who had devoted himself to death for the safety of his country, furnished the

Athenians with a pretence for abolishing the royal authority. None of the human race, they declared, was worthy to succeed Codrus; and none but Jupiter should thenceforth reign in Athens.† Medon, the eldest son of that admired prince, was appointed first magistrate of the republic under the humbler title of archon. His brothers, Neleus and Androclus, probably dissatisfied with these transactions, determined to leave their country. Their

design was approved by the Achæan and Messenian refugees, and by many Athenian citizens, who complained that Attica was too narrow and barren to maintain the increasing numbers of its inhabitants. The restless spirits in Phocis, Bœotia, and other neighbouring provinces, eagerly joined the emigrants. They sailed to Asia Minor; expelled the ancient inhabitants, a mixed race of Lydians, Carians, and Pelasgi; and seized the central and most beautiful portion of the Asiatic coast.‡ Their colonies were gradually diffused from the banks of the Hermus to the promontory of Posideion. They afterwards took possession of Chios and Samos; and all these countries were united by the common name of Ionia, to denote that the Ionians composed the most numerous division of the colony.||

The Ionic migration. A. C. 1055.

* Pausan. l. vii. c. xxv. Justin. l. ii. † Pausan. l. vii. c. ii.

‡ Herodot. l. i. c. cxlii. § Strabo, l. xiv. p. 632, & seq. Pausan. l. vii. c. ii.

During the same turbulent ages, intestine sedition, foreign invasion, or the restless spirit of adventure and rapine, occasioned other important extensions of Grecian colonisation. The most numerous colonies occupied the isles of the Ionian and *Ægean* seas, the southern coast of Italy almost intersected by the former, and the winding shores of Asia Minor* so beautifully diversified by the latter. The larger islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Cyprus, were very anciently planted by Greeks. While the Hellenic stock pushed forth these vigorous shoots towards the east and west, very considerable branches extended towards the north and south. The maritime parts of Epirus, Macedonia, and Thrace, themselves abounding in Greek settlements, poured forth new colonies, along the European shores of the Propontis and Euxine;† and emigrants from the Peloponnesus having early established themselves on the opposite coast of Africa, were gradually diffused from the confines of Egypt to the Syrtic gulf.‡ The history of all these colonies, some of which rivalled in arts and others in arms, the glory of the mother country, will merit our attention, in proportion as they emerge from obscurity, and take a station in the general system of Grecian politics.

The Asiatic Greeks, whose affairs first became intimately connected with those of the mother country, received a considerable accession of strength in consequence of the renewal of hostilities between the Athenians and Dorians. The latter were finally expelled from most of their strong-holds in Megara. Disdaining after this misfortune to return into the Peloponnesus, many of them sailed to the islands of Rhodes and Crete, already peopled by Doric tribes; while others transported themselves to the peninsula of Caria, which, in honour to their mother country, received the name of Doris.||

Greek colonies established in Macedon, Thrace, Africa, Magna Grecia, &c.

The Doric migration. A. C. 944.

* Thucyd. i. i. & Strabo, *passim*.

† Herodot. i. ii. & i. iv.

‡ Herodot. i. iv. c. cxlvii. Strabo, i. x. & i. xvii.

§ Strabo, & Pausan. & Herodot. i. vii. c. lxxiii.

View of the Asiatic colonies. In consequence of this establishment, which was formed two hundred and forty years after the Trojan war, the western coast of Asia Minor was planted by the Eolians in the north, the Ionians in the middle, and the Dorians in the south. These original divisions of the Hellenic race retained in their new settlements the peculiarities of accent and dialect, by which they had been respectively distinguished in Europe;* and which, at the time of their several emigrations, prevailed in Bœotia, Attica and Lacedæmon. The Bœotians, and Lacedæmonians, who claimed the first honours, the one of the Eolic, and the other of the Dorian name, adhered, with little variation, to their ancient dialects: but the Athenians, more ingenious, or fonder of novelty, made such considerable alterations in their writing and pronunciation, as remarkably distinguished them from their Ionian brethren; and thus the same language came to be modified into four subdivisions,† or dialects, which may be still recognised in the invaluable remains of Grecian literature.

Peculiar advantages of the Ionian colonies. Of all these innumerable colonies, the Ionians will demand our earliest and most studious attention. They settled in a country of great extent and fertility, enjoying the most delicious climate, and peculiarly adapted to a commercial intercourse with the most improved nations of antiquity. Favoured by so many advantages, they silently flourished in peace and prosperity, till their growing wealth and numbers excited the avarice or the jealousy of the powers of Asia. They were successively conquered by the Lydians and Persians, but never thoroughly subdued. Having imbibed the principles of European liberty, they spurned the yoke of Asiatic bondage. In their glorious struggles to re-assume the character of freemen, they solicited and obtained the assistance of their Athenian ancestors, and occasioned that memorable rivalry between the Greeks and Persians, which, having lasted two centuries, ended in the destruction of the Persian empire. In this illustrious contest,

Their influence on the affairs of their European ancestors.

* Heraclid. Pont. apud. Athenzum, l. xiv. † Strabo l. viii.

the first successes of the Greeks against enemies far more powerful, and incomparably more numerous than themselves, inspired them with an enthusiasm of valour. Their exploits merited not only praise but wonder,* and seemed fit objects for that historical romance, which in the progress of literature, naturally succeeds to epic poetry.

The writers who undertook to record and to adorn the trophies of Marathon and Plataea, had occasion to look back to the transactions of more remote times. But in taking this retrospect, *they* discovered, or at least *we* may discover by their works, that their inquiries began too late to afford much authentic information on that important subject. Yet, imperfect as their relations necessarily are, they serve to explain by what concurrence of favourable circumstances and causes the Greeks adopted those singular institutions, acquired that sense of national honour, and attained those virtues of policy and prowess, which enabled them, by the most splendid series of exploits recorded in history, first to resist, then to invade, and finally to subdue the monarchy of Cyrus.

During the prevalence of those generous, though romantic opinions, which characterized the heroic ages, the authority of kings was founded on religion, supported by gratitude, and confirmed by utility. While they approved themselves worthy ministers of heaven, they were entitled to due and hereditary honours;† but in the exercise of the regal office, they were bound to respect the rights, the sentiments, and even the prejudices of their subjects. The fatal dictates of ambition and avarice led them to transgress the prescribed limits, and to trample on those laws which their predecessors had held sacred.‡ The minute division of landed property, which had already taken place not only, as above

Connexion
of this his-
tory.

Abolition of
monarchy
in Greece.

* Τα εργα μεγάλα και θαυμάσια. Herodot. p. i. The exploits which he relates, still more than his manner of relating them, render the work of Herodotus the intermediate shade between poetry and history, between Homer and Thucydides.

† Επὶ ρητοῖς γράσι πατρικῇ Βασιλείᾳ. Thucydid. l. i.

‡ Thucydid. l. i. p. 10.

mentioned, in the Peloponnesus, but in the northern provinces of Greece, rendered the nobles and people more sensible of these encroachments, which they must at once boldly resist, or submit for ever to the yoke of oppression. Reduced to this alternative, the Greeks were inclined by disposition, and enabled by situation, to prefer and to maintain the most honourable part. The prerogatives of royalty were not as yet supported by the exclusive right of the sword, by which a particular class of men might intimidate and control the resolutions of their fellow subjects. The more independent and illustrious citizens, who had been accustomed from the earliest times to come armed to the council or assembly, communicated their grievances, and took proper means to redress them.* Miltas, the fourth Argive prince in succession to Temenus, was condemned to death for usurping absolute power. Monarchy expired more honourably in Attica; it perished still more disgracefully in Arcadia, but was gradually abolished in every province of Greece, except Sparta alone, from the southern extremity of Peloponnesus to the northern frontier of Thessaly.†

Accumulated disorders in that country.

The important, though remote consequences of this revolution, will be explained in the sequel. Its immediate tendency served only to multiply the evils which it was designed to remedy. Greece, oppressed by its kings, was still more oppressed by its archons, or magistrates;‡ and, already too much divided under the ancient government, was still more subdivided under the new form of polity. Many inferior cities disdained the jurisdiction of their respective capitals. Several of them affected separate and independent sovereignty. Each town, each district, maintained war with its neighbours; and the fanciful state of nature, according to the philosophy of Hobbes, was actually realized in that distracted country.||

Circumstances which tended to remove them.

From these accumulated disorders, which seemed scarcely capable of augmentation, it is time to turn our view to those events and causes which operated in a contrary direction, and gradually introduced

* Aristot. Polit. l. iv. c. 13.

† Aristot. Polit. l. iv. c. 18. Plut. in Solon.

‡ Thucyd. l. i. p. 10.

|| Thucyd. *ibid.*

union and happiness. The Dorian conquest of Peloponnesus, otherwise productive of much confusion and bloodshed in that peninsula, greatly extended, however, the salutary influence of the Amphictyonic council. In the northern parts of Greece, this institution, which had been originally intended to prevent foreign invasions had been found equally useful in promoting domestic concord. The Dorians being constituent members of the council, continued to attend its meetings after they had settled beyond the mountainous isthmus of Corinth. The provinces which they conquered gradually assumed the same privilege. The Amphictyons thus became a representative assembly of the whole Grecian name, consisting not only of the three original tribes of Ionians, Dorians, and Eolians, but of the several subdivisions of these tribes, and of the various communities formed from their promiscuous combination.* Each independent state had a right to send two members, the Pylagoras† and Hieromnemon,‡ respectively intrusted with the civil and religious concerns of their constituents. The abolition of royalty rendering the independent communities more numerous, increased the Amphictyons to about an hundred persons.‖ The central city of Delphi, so famous from causes that will be immediately explained, was chosen as a convenient place for holding their vernal assembly; the autumnal was still held at

* The principal divisions were—

- | | | |
|--|---------------|--------------|
| 1 Ionians, among whom the Athenians held the first rank. | | |
| 2 The Dorians, among whom the Lacedæmonians held the first rank. | | |
| 3 The Eolians, among whom the Bœotians held the first rank. | | |
| 4 Thessalians. | 5 Magnetes. | 6 Achæans. |
| 7 Phithiotes. | 8 Phocians. | 9 Malians. |
| 10 Ænians or Oetians. | 11 Dolopians. | 12 Locrians. |

Confer. Pausan. in Phocic. & Æschin. de Falsa Legat.

† Demosth. de Coron. sec. 51.

‡ Suidas, ad voc.

‖ Thirty-one Amphictyonic cities undertook the defence of Greece in the Persian war. (Plutarch. in Themistocl.) The one half of Greece, on that memorable occasion, remained neutral, or sided with the enemy. (Hærodot. & Diodor.) If each city sent two members to the Amphictyons, the whole would amount to one hundred and twenty-four. But as some cities enjoyed the right of being represented in that council only in conjunction with others, this might reduce the number of members to that assigned in the text.

Thermopylæ. An oath, guarded by the most solemn imprecations, was administered to each member, "that he would never subvert any Amphictyonic city, nor stop the courses of its running water, but punish to the utmost of his power those who committed such outrages."* Their constituents, however, discovered on innumerable occasions, that they thought themselves but imperfectly bound by this sacred promise. Every excess of animosity prevailed among the Grecian republics, notwithstanding the interposition of the Amphictyons. Yet it cannot be doubted that their authority tended sometimes to appease, sometimes to moderate contention; and that this respected tribunal, though deficient in coercive power, had a considerable effect towards suppressing discord, and restraining the barbarities of war.†

The origin
of Grecian
oracles.

The Amphictyons gained much consideration by declaring themselves protectors of the Delphic oracle, which had been growing to importance since the Dorian conquest, and which thenceforth gradually acquired an extraordinary influence on the affairs of Greece. It is seldom possible to explain the rise of institutions derived from the natural passions of men, or founded on prejudices as ancient as the world. The most probable information concerning the origin of Grecian oracles was conveyed to Herodotus,‡ in a thin allegorical veil, by the priests of Dodona, and explained to that inquisitive and ingenious traveller by the priests of Jupiter in Egypt. In the fanciful style of antiquity, a black pigeon flew from the temple of Egyptian Thebes to Thesprotia in Epirus, perched on a spreading oak, proclaimed with a human voice, that an oracle of Jupiter should be established; and the inhabitants of the neighbouring hamlet of Dodona obeyed the divine admonition. In plainer language, a female attendant belonging to the temple of Thebes on the Nile, was transported to Epirus by Phœnician pirates, and there sold as a slave. Her Egyptian complexion deserved the epithet of black among the mountaineers of Thesprotia, border-

* Æschin. de Falsa Legat. sect. 35.

† Plut. in Cimon.

‡ Herodot. l. ii. c. 54.

ing on the Illyric hordes, who were remarked by the Greek historians for their blooming complexions, active vigour, and longevity.* She was said to speak the language of birds, before she understood the Grecian tongue, often distinguished by the appellation of human speech†. The enterprising female, though reduced to captivity among those whom she must have regarded as Barbarians, did not yield to despair, but dexterously availed herself of the advantages which she derived from her education and her country. In Egypt, superstition had been already reduced into system; and a pretention to prophecy was one of the most successful artifices by which the priests of Thebes long governed the opinions and resolutions of prince and people. Her attendance on the temple had taught her some of the arts by which this pretension was maintained. She chose the dark shade of a venerable oak; delivered mysterious answers to the admiring multitude; her reputation increased; success gained her associates; a temple rose to Jupiter, and was surrounded by houses for his ministers.

This singular institution was imitated, at a very early period, in many provinces of Greece. The various and inconsistent accounts of similar establishments abundantly confirm the antiquity of their origin, and the multiplicity of temples, groves, grottos, and caverns, in which the favourites of innumerable divinities declared their will to men, proves them not less universal than ancient.‡ During the heroic ages, indeed, as illustrious and pious men believed themselves, on important occasions, honoured with the immediate presence and advice of their heavenly protectors, the secondary information of priests and oracles was less generally regarded and esteemed. But in proportion as the belief ceased that the gods appeared in a human form, or the supposed visits at least of these celestial beings seemed less frequent and familiar, the office of priest became more important and respectable, and the confidence in oracles continually gained ground. At length, these

Reason why their authority was not considerable during the heroic ages.

* Lucian in Macrob.

† Homer, *passim*.

‡ Strabo, l. viii. p. 352. & p. 418. & Strabo and Pausan. *passim*.

admired institutions, being considered as the chief and almost only mode of communication with supernatural powers, acquired a degree of influence calculated to control every other principle of authority, whether civil or sacred.*

Circumstances which gave peculiar celebrity to the oracle of Delphi. But these various oracles, though alike founded on ignorance, and raised by deceit, were not equally supported by power and policy. The crafty Cretans, (apt scholars of Egypt,) who instituted the worship of the Delphian Apollo,† gradually procured the credit of superior veracity to the predictions of the god whom they served. Favourable circumstances concurred; the central situation of Delphi; the vernal session of the Amphictyons; the lustre derived from the immediate protection of that assembly; above all the uncommon and awful aspect of the place itself, fitted to excite wonder in ages less addicted to superstition.

Description of that place.

That branch of the celebrated mount Parnassus, which divides the districts of Phocis and Locris, contained, towards its southern extremity, a profound cavern, the crevices of which emitted a sulphureous vapour, that, powerfully affecting the brain, was deemed capable of inspiring those who breathed it with religious frenzy, and prophetic enthusiasm.‡ Around the principal mouth of the chasm, the city of Delphi arose in the form of a theatre, upon the winding declivity of Parnassus, whose fantastic tops overshadowed it like a canopy, on the north, while two immense rocks rendered it inaccessible on the east and west, and the rugged and shapeless mount Cirphis defended it on the south.¶ The foot of the last-named mountain is washed by the river Plistus, which discharges itself into the sea at the distance of six miles

* Herodot. Thucydid. and Xenoph. passim.

† Homer. Hymn. ad Apollin.

‡ Diodor. Sicul. l. xvi. c. 26. & Strab. l. ix. p. 419.

¶ Homer has rather painted than described the situation of Pytho, Apollo's temple at Delphi:

Αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεῖν
Πιετρή ὑποκρεμαται, κοίλῃ δ' ὑποδεδρομε Βησσα, &c.

Hymn. ad Apollin.

from the sacred city. This inaccessible and romantic situation, from which the place derived the name of Delphi,* was rendered still more striking, by the innumerable echoes which multiplied every sound, and increased the ignorant veneration of visitants for the god of the oracle. The artful ministers of Apollo gradually collected such objects in the groves and temple as were fitted to astonish the senses of the admiring multitude. The splendour of marble, the magic of painting, the invaluable statues of gold and silver, represented (to use the language of antiquity) not the resemblance of any earthly habitation, but rather expressed the image of Olympus, adorned and enlightened by the actual presence of the gods. During the age of Homer, the rich magnificence of Delphi was already proverbial;† and when Xerxes undertook his memorable expedition against Greece, the dedications in this pious treasury, accumulated from the superstition and vanity of Greeks and Barbarians, were held equivalent‡ to the revenues of the monarch of Asia, who covered the broad Ægean with his fleet, and transported into Europe two millions of armed men.

The protection and superintendence of this precious depository of riches and superstition belonged to the Amphictyons. But the inhabitants of Delphi, who, if we may use the expression, were the original proprietors of the oracle, always continued to direct the religious ceremonies, and to conduct the important business of prophecy.‖ It was *their* province alone to determine at what time, and on what occasion, the Pythia should mount the sacred tripod, to receive the prophetic steams, by which she communicated with Apollo. When overflowing with the heavenly inspiration, she uttered the confused words, or rather frantic sounds,

The particular constitution of that oracle.

* Δελφοί is explained in the glossaries by synonymous words signifying *solitary, alone*.

† Οὐδ' ὅσσα λαῖνος οὐδος ἀθητορος ἐντός εἰργει.

‡ See Dissert. sur l'Oracle de Deiph. par M. Hardion, Mem. de l'Academ. The comparison was, doubtless, an exaggeration of the wealth of Delphi, which was little known till later times, when the Phocians plundered the temple of near a million sterling, without exhausting its treasures. But of this more hereafter.

‖ Strabo, l. ix.

irregularly suggested by the impulse of the god; the Delphians* collected these sounds, reduced them into order, animated them with sense, and adorned them with harmony. The Pythia, appointed and dismissed at pleasure was a mere instrument in the hands of those artful ministers, whose character became so venerable and so sacred, that they were finally regarded, not merely as attendants and worshippers, but as the peculiar family of the god.† Their number was considerable, and never exactly ascertained, since all the principal inhabitants of Delphi, claiming an immediate relation to Apollo, were entitled to officiate in the rites of his sanctuary; and even the inferior ranks of freemen belonging to that sacred city, were continually employed in dances, festivals, processions, and in displaying all the gay pageantry of an airy and elegant superstition.

Its influence in establishing the Olympic games and Spartan laws.

The subsequent history of Greece attests the important and salutary influence of the Delphic oracle, which no sooner attained splendour, than it confirmed, by its awful sanction, two institutions, the first religious, the second civil, and both accompanied with very extraordinary consequences. The Olympic games and Spartan laws, were respectively established by Iphitus and Lycurgus, contemporaries,‡ friends, both animated by the true spirit of patriotism, and unquestionably the most illustrious characters of the age in which they lived;|| yet the roads which they pursued for reaching the same goal, the safety of their respective territories, were so widely different, that, while the Olympic games rendered Elis the most pacific, the laws of

* Strabo, l. ix. p. 419.

† Lucian Phaler.

‡ Phlegon apud Euseb. Chronic. & Aristot. apud Plutarch. in Lycurg.

|| Lycurgus and Iphitus are commonly supposed to have instituted the Olympic games 108 years before the period to which the Olympiads could be regularly traced. This was 776 years before Christ, when Coræbus won in the foot race. See Pausan. l. v. Sir Isaac Newton considers the chronology preceding the victory of Coræbus as so extremely uncertain, that he proposes striking off the imaginary interval between him and Iphitus; which appears the more reasonable, because history is totally silent with regard to any occurrences that must have happened in the intermediate space of 108 years.

Lycurgus made Sparta the most warlike, of all the Grecian communities.

It was held an ancient and sacred custom in the heroic ages, to celebrate the funerals of illustrious men by such shows and ceremonies as seemed most pleasing to their shades. The tombs, around which the melancholy manes were supposed to hover, naturally became the scene of such solemnities. There, the fleeting ghosts of departed heroes were entertained and honoured by exhibitions of strength and address;* while the gods, though inhabiting the broad expanse† of heaven, were yet peculiarly worshipped, by prayers and sacrifices in the several places, which sometimes the wilderness, and sometimes the elegance of fancy, had assigned for their favourite, though temporary, residence on earth. The lofty chain of Olympus, separating the barbarous kingdom of Macedon from the fertile plains of Thessaly, is distinguished by several circumstances, which seemed justly to entitle it to that honour. This long and lofty ridge ascends above the regions of storms and tempests. Its winding sides are diversified by woods and intersected by torrents. Its fantastic tops, towering above the clouds, reflect, during day, the rays of the sun, and sometimes brighten the gloom of night with the lambent splendours of the Aurora Borealis.‡ This extraordinary mountain began naturally to be regarded as the principal terrestrial habitations of the gods; along the recesses of Olympus|| each divinity had his appropriate palace; on its highest summit, Jupiter often assembled the heavenly council; and from thence, veiled in a white gleam, the protectors of mankind descended, and were visibly manifested to mortal eyes.§

While Olympus was considered as the general rendezvous of these fanciful beings, it was natural to imagine that the partiality of particular divinities might select other favourite sites

Remote causes of the establishment of the Olympic games, and other similar institutions.

* Iliad, l. xxiii.

† Οὐρανὸς εὐρύς. Homer, passim.

‡ See the inimitable description in the 6th book of the Odyssey, ver. 42.

|| Κατὰ πτυχὰς Οὐλύμπου. Along the foldings of Olympus.

§ Homer, passim; and particularly Iliad, l. xix. ver. 40.

on earth for their separate abode. The singular aspect of Delphi, or Pytho, which recommended it as the seat of the oracle of Apollo, and afterwards of the Pythian games, has already been described. The Corinthian territory was particularly consecrated to Neptune;* for where could the god of the sea be more properly worshipped, than on a narrow isthmus, whose shores were adorned by grateful monuments of delivered mariners, and which had continued, from early times, the principal centre of Grecian navigation?

Immediate
causes of
the esta-
blishment
of the
Olympic
games.

A tradition prevailed, that even before the Dorian conquest, the fruitful and picturesque banks of the Alpheus, in the province of Elis, or Eleia, had been consecrated to Jupiter.† It is certain that athletic sports, similar to those described by Homer at the funeral of Patroclus, had been on many occasions exhibited in Elis, by assembled chiefs, with more than ordinary solemnity‡. The Dorian conquerors are said to have renewed the consecration of that delightful province. But the wars which early prevailed between them and the Athenians, and the jealousies and hostilities which afterwards broke out among themselves,|| totally interrupted the religious ceremonies and exhibitions with which they had been accustomed to honour their common gods and heroes. Amidst the calamities which afflicted or threatened the Peloponnesus, Iphitus, a descendant of Oxylyus, to whom the province of Eleia had fallen in the general partition of the peninsula, applied to the Delphic oracle. The priests of Apollo, ever disposed to favour the views of kings and legislators, answered agreeably to his wish, that the festivals anciently celebrated at Olympia, on the Alpheus, must be renewed, and an armistice proclaimed for such states as were willing to partake of them, and desirous to avert the vengeance of heaven.§ Fortified by this authority, and assisted by the advice of Lycurgus, Iphitus took measures, not only for restoring the Olympic solemnity,

* Pausan. Corinth. & Strabo, p. 382.

† Pausan. l. v. passim; & l. vi. p. 456.

‡ Iliad, ii. ver. 697. & Iliad, ix. ver. 623.

|| Pausan, l. v.

§ Phlegon apud Euseb.

but for rendering it perpetual. The injunction of the oracle was speedily diffused through the remotest parts of Greece, by the numerous votaries who frequented the sacred shrine. The armistice was proclaimed in Peloponnesus, and preparations were made in Eleia for exhibiting shows and performing sacrifices. In the heroic ages, feats of bodily strength and address were destined to the honour of deceased warriors ; hymns and sacrifices were reserved for the gods. But the flexible texture of Grecian superstition, easily confounding the expressions of respectful gratitude and pious veneration, enabled Iphitus to unite both in his new institution.

The festival, which lasted five days, began and ended with a sacrifice to Olympian Jove. The intermediate time was chiefly filled up by the gymnastic exercises, in which all freemen of Grecian extraction were invited to contend, provided they had been born in lawful wedlock, and had lived untainted by any infamous immoral stain. The preparation for this part of the entertainment was made in the gymnasium of Elis, a spacious edifice, surrounded by a double range of pillars, with an open area in the middle. Adjoining were various apartments, containing baths, and other conveniencies for the combatants. The neighbouring country was gradually adorned with porticos, shady walks and groves, interspersed with seats and benches, the whole originally destined to relieve the fatigues and anxiety of the candidates for Olympic fame ; and frequented, in later times, by sophists and philosophers, who were fond to contemplate wisdom, and communicate knowledge in those delightful retreats. The order of the athletic exercises or combats, was established by Lycurgus, and corresponded almost exactly to that described by Homer, in the twenty-third book of the Iliad, and eighth of the Odyssey. Iphitus, we are told, appointed the other ceremonies and entertainments ; settled the regular return of the festival at the end of every fourth year, in the month of July ; and gave to the whole solemnity that form and arrangement, which it preserved with little variation, above a

Description
of the nature
and design of
this institution.

thousand years ; a period exceeding the duration of the most famous kingdoms and republics of antiquity.*

Its important consequences.

Such is the account of Grecian writers, who, doubtless, have often ascribed to positive institution, inventions and usages naturally resulting from the progressive manners of society. When we come to examine the Elian games in their more improved state, together with the innumerable imitations of them in other provinces of Greece, there will occur reasons for believing, that many regulations referred, by an easy solution, to the legislative wisdom of Iphitus or Lycurgus, were introduced by time or accident, continued through custom, improved by repeated trials, and confirmed by a sense of their utility. Yet such an institution as the Olympiad, even in its least perfect form, must have been attended with manifold advantages to society. It is sufficient barely to mention the suspension of hostilities which took place, not only during the celebration of the festival, but a considerable time both before and after it. Considered as a religious ceremony, at which the whole Grecian name were invited, and even enjoined, to assist, it was well adapted to facilitate intercourse, to promote knowledge, to soften prejudice, and to hasten the progress of civilization and humanity. Greece, and particularly Peloponnesus, was the centre from which the adventurous spirit of its inhabitants had diffused innumerable colonies through the surrounding nations. To these widely separated communities, which, notwithstanding their common origin, seems to have lost all connexion and correspondence, the Olympiad served as a common bond of alliance, and point of reunion. The celebrity of this festival continually attracted to it the characters most distinguished† for genius and enterprise, whose fame would have otherwise been unknown, and lost in the boundless extent of Grecian territory. The remote inhabitants, not only of European Greece, but of Asia and Africa, being assembled to the worship of common gods, were formed to the sense of a general

* See the authors cited by West, in his dissertation on the Olympic Games.

† Pindar, *passim*.

interest, and excited to the pursuit of national honour and prosperity. Strangers of similar dispositions might confirm in Elis the sacred and indissoluble ties of hospitality. If their communities were endangered by any barbarous power, they might there solicit assistance from their Grecian brethren. On other occasions they might explain the benefits which, in peace or war, their respective countries were best qualified to communicate: and the Olympic festival might thus serve as a centre of communication and source of intelligence, and in some measure supply the defect of posts, gazettes, resident ambassadors, and similar institutions always unknown to antiquity.

Iphitus did not, probably foresee the manifold advantages destined to result from his plan. His main aim was to protect the small principality of Elis against the dreaded invasion of more powerful neighbours. This he effectually accomplished by fencing it round with a wall of sanctity, while his more daring associate fortified Sparta with disciplined valour. Yet Lycurgus had farther ends in view, when he proposed those celebrated laws which were universally admired, but never imitated. Greece in that unfortunate age presented a gloomy picture of domestic discord. The elevated, though romantic, sentiments of antiquity had ceased to prevail; the heroic character was effaced; and the generous, but often destructive expeditions into foreign lands, were interrupted by less daring, but still more fatal undertakings. The introduction of separate wealth had introduced inequality and ambition. Each petty prince was desirous to exalt his prerogative, and to extend his dominions. The passions of neighbouring princes balanced his desire of conquest. The resistance of his subjects counteracted his usurpations. Every kingdom, almost every city, was torn by a double conflict; dangers threatened on all sides; subjects expelled their kings, and kings became tyrants.

State of
Greece in
the age of
Lycurgus.

During these tumultuary scenes, Lycurgus of the line of Procles, and commonly reckoned the tenth in descent from Hercules, received the Spartan sceptre upon the death of his eldest brother Polydectes; but

His justice
exposes him
to resent-
ment in
Sparta.

the widow of Polydectes declaring herself pregnant, he resigned the crown, and assumed the title of protector. This delicate attention to justice, rare in that turbulent age, excited just admiration for Lycurgus, which was enhanced by contrast. The ambitious princess, more solicitous to preserve the honours of a queen than desirous to know the tender cares of a mother, secretly intimated to the Protector, that, if he consented to marry her, she would engage that no posthumous son of his brother should disappoint his hopes of the succession. Lycurgus feigned to enter into this unnatural project, but exhorted her not to endanger her health by procuring an abortion. When her delivery drew near, he sent trusty persons to attend her, with orders that, if she brought forth a son, the infant should be immediately carried to him. This command was obeyed, while he supped with the principal magistrates of the republic. He received the child in his arms, saying, "Spartans, a king is born to you!" Joyous congratulations followed, to commemorate which, the infant was named Chaerilaus, "the people's joy." Notwithstanding the fame redounding to Lycurgus

His travels. from this transaction, the intrigues of the slighted

Queen raised a powerful faction against him. He withdrew himself from the gathering storm: and, being yet in early manhood, indulged his inclination for visiting foreign countries; an inclination strongest in liberal minds, and most commendable in ages of rudeness and ignorance, when the faint rays of knowledge must be collected from an extensive surface.

Collects Homer's poems and carries them to Sparta.

The renowned island of Crete, which had given birth to the gods and government of Greece, first attracted his regard. The Cretans still partially adhered to the laws of Minos; but their island never resumed its pristine lustre after the fatal war of

Troy. From Crete he sailed to Egypt, and carefully examined the civil and religious polity of that ancient kingdom. Despisng the terrors of the sea, as well as the fatigues and dangers of unexplored journeys through barbarous or desert countries, he is said to have reached the populous and flourishing kingdoms of the East: nor, could we trust the partial evidence of his

countryman Aristocrates,* did the remote regions of India escape his observation. He returned by the coast of Asia Minor, and observed, with equal astonishment and satisfaction, the innumerable Greek colonies that had risen with such sudden splendour on the western coast of that valuable peninsula. The numerous advantages derived from this extensive view of men and manners, moulded by such a wide variety of religious, political, and military institutions, were all eclipsed by one discovery—the immortal poems of Homer, unknown to the Dorian conquerors of Peloponnesus, but carefully preserved among the Eolians and Ionians, whose ancestors they celebrated. Lycurgus collected these invaluable compositions; arranged the several parts; transcribed and transported them to Sparta,† where after two centuries of migrations and revolutions, the customs, as well as the sentiments described by the divine poet had been obliterated and forgotten.

Neither the astonishing invention of Homer, nor his inimitable fancy, nor the unrivalled copiousness, energy, and harmony of his style, so powerfully excited the discerning admiration of Lycurgus, as the treasures of his political and moral knowledge, which being copied from the bright exemplars of an heroic age, might be employed to reform the abuses of a degenerate indeed, but not totally corrupted, nation. By restoring, in particular, the moderate spirit of policy which prevailed in happier times, the

The views which they suggested to Lycurgus.

* Apud Plutarch. in Lycurg.

† This fact is generally acknowledged: yet Plutarch tells us, that some writers were absurd enough to relate that Lycurgus lived soon after Homer, and others, that he had actually seen the divine poet. Homer describes the Peloponnesus with such accuracy, that the geographer Strabo follows him, as it were, step by step, through the peninsula. It is incredible, therefore, that he who was so perfectly acquainted with that part of Greece, should have been totally forgotten there soon after his own times. Homer, it has been often observed, preserves a remarkable silence about himself; yet his antiquity, were it not sufficiently evident from the internal proofs above mentioned, p. 50. might be proved from *Odyss.* l. i. ver. 351. and particularly from *Iliad*, l. xx. ver. 308. He flourished before the return of the Heracleidæ, eighty years after the taking of Troy; a revolution which, had it happened before his time could not have escaped his notice.

Spartan legislator might avert the most imminent dangers that threatened his family and his country. The royal families of Argos, Athens, and Thebes, had been reluctantly expelled by the resentment or caution of their injured or jealous subjects, who regretted that the regal power was so apt to degenerate into a system of oppression. The misfortunes which had abolished the honours and almost extinguished the race of Atreus, Oedipus, Theseus, and so many other kings and heroes of antiquity, must pursue, and might soon overtake the descendants of Hercules, whom the seasonable laws of Lycurgus maintained, during seven centuries, on the Spartan throne. The accumulation of private wealth, together with the natural progress of arts and luxury, would gradually render the possessions of the Greeks more tempting prizes to rapacity and ambition, in proportion to the decay of that courage and discipline which were requisite to their defence. The fertile plains of Laconia might again be ravaged by the arms of some uncultivated, but warlike tribe; Sparta might suffer similar calamities to those which she afterwards inflicted on Messené, and the alternative of dominion or servitude depended on the early institutions that should be respectively embraced by so many neighbouring and independent, and therefore rival communities.

The main
aim of his
legislation.

The sagacity of Lycurgus thus contemplating the relations and interests of his country and his family, regarded martial spirit and political liberty as the great ends of his legislation. These important objects had been attained by the primitive institutions, so faithfully described by Homer. Lycurgus determined to imitate the simple beauty of that illustrious model; and, to the end that the Spartan constitution might enjoy a degree of permanence and stability which the *heroic policies* had not possessed, he resolved to avoid the rocks on which *they* had shipwrecked, to extinguish the ambition of distant or extensive conquest, to level the inequality of fortune, to crush the baneful effects of wealth and luxury, in one word to arrest the progress of what is called the refinement, but what seemed to the manly discernment of this legislator, the corruption, of human society.

To form such a design was the work of no vulgar mind; to carry it into execution required the most strenuous exertions of perseverance and courage. Yet, even at this distance of time, we may discover several favourable circumstances, which seasonably conspired with the views of Lycurgus; we may discover in the gradual display of his system, how the first institutions naturally paved the way for those which succeeded them; and while we admire the genius and the virtue, we must also acknowledge the dexterity and the fortune, of the Spartan legislator.

Circumstances which favoured his views.

The experience of history (and particularly the history which we have undertaken to record) attests the extraordinary revolution which one bold, wise, and disinterested man may produce on the affairs of the community of which he is a member. The domestic disorders which multiplied in Sparta after the departure of Lycurgus, obliged all ranks of men to look up to his abilities for protection. The animated declamations of Thales, a poet whom he had carried with him from Crete, and who rehearsed, with rapturous exstasy, the verses of Homer and his own, singularly disposed the minds of men for adopting his proposed regulations.

But neither these propitious circumstances, nor the merit of ten years travel in pursuit of moral science and political knowledge, nor the ties of blood, of friendship, and of gratitude, which confirmed the influence of Lycurgus among the principal inhabitants of Sparta, could have enabled this great man to establish his plan of government, without the friendly co-operation of the Delphic oracle, which, since the decay of the heroic opinions and belief, had become the sovereign umpire of Greece. The Pythia addressed him in terms of the highest respect; hesitated whether to call him a god or a man, but rather deemed him a divinity; approved the general spirit of the institutions which he proposed to establish; and promised to furnish him, as occasion might require, with such additional regulations, as (when adopted by the Spartans) would render their republic happy and immortal. Fortified by this authority, Lycurgus proceeded with a daring yet skilful hand, first, to new-model

His reception at Delphi.

the government; secondly, to regulate wealth and possessions; thirdly, to reform education and manners; judiciously pursuing this natural order of legislation, because men are less jealous of power than tenacious of property, and less tenacious of property itself than of their ancient usages and customs.*

He regulates the distribution of political power among the different orders of the state.

The first rhetra,† or laws which he established tended to restore the mild moderation of mixed government, which distinguished the heroic ages. They confirmed the hereditary honours, but abolished the despotism,‡ of kings; they enforced the dutiful obedience, but vindicated the liberty, of subjects.

Of the reigning princes, Chaerelaus owed to Lycurgus his throne and his life, and Archelaus deemed it dangerous to oppose his projects. Instructed by the fatal experience of neighbouring tyrants, they were both easily prevailed on to prefer a secure, though limited, to an absolute, but precarious reign. The superstition of the people could not decline the authority of the legislator, when confirmed by the respected command of Apollo; and the interest of the nobles engaged them unanimously to promote his measures. With this illustrious body, consisting of twenty-eight chiefs, the most distinguished in the tribes and cities of Laconia, Lycurgus consulted by what means to prevent the political dissensions from settling in the despotism of kings, or in the insolence of democracy. By his new regulations the ancient honours of the nobility were confirmed and extended. They were formed into a permanent council, or senate, which examined all matters of government before they were proposed to the delibera-

* The only dangerous opposition that he met with, was occasioned by his laws respecting these objects. A tumult being excited, the insolent Alcander wounded him in the face, by which Lycurgus lost the sight of an eye. But the persuasive eloquence of the legislator quelled the sedition, and his moderation converted Alcander from a violent opposer into a strenuous partisan. Plut. in Lycurg.

† The word is synonymous with *oracula*, *fata*: by which names his laws were distinguished as the immediate dictates and inspirations of heaven.

‡ The difference between the *basileiai*, or royalties of the heroic ages and the *tyrannides* of succeeding times, is explained by Aristot. Politic. and Xenoph. Repub. Spart.

tion of the people. The kings were entitled, as in the heroic ages, to be the hereditary presidents of this national tribunal; which, as in all important questions, it possessed a negative before debate; as the members were chosen for life; and as, on the decease of any senator, his son or nearest kinsman was naturally substituted in his stead, might have soon arrogated to itself the whole legislative as well as executive authority.

In order to counteract this dangerous result, Lycurgus instituted the Ephori,* five annual magistrates, invested with a temporary power to inspect and control the administration of government, and to maintain the spirit and vigour of the established constitution. To the Ephori it belonged to convoke, prorogue, and dissolve the greater and lesser assemblies of the people; the former composed of nine thousand Spartans, inhabitants of the capital; the latter of thirty thousand Lacedæmonians, inhabitants of the inferior towns and villages. By frequently convening such numerous bodies of men, who had arms in their hands, they rendered them sensible of their own strength. The Lacedæmonians felt themselves entitled not only to execute the just, but to thwart the unjust, orders of the senate. Nor was liberty endangered by the limited prerogative of the kings, who monthly exchanged with the Ephori solemn oaths; the former swearing for themselves to observe the laws of Sparta, the latter† for the people whom they represented, to maintain the hereditary honours of the Herculean race, to respect them as ministers of religion, to obey them as judges in peace, and to follow them as leaders in war.‡

* Their name, denoting overseers, or inspectors, properly describes their office.

† The authority of Herodotus, l. i. and of Xenophon de Repub. Spart. refutes Aristot. Polit. l. ii. c. 5. and Plutarch in Lycurg. The last mentioned writers refer the institution of the Ephori to Theopompus, who lived 130 years after Lycurgus. But this assertion only proves that neither Aristotle nor Plutarch had sufficiently entered into the views of the Spartan legislator. The Ephori, as it appears from Xenophon and Herodotus, and from the whole transactions of Sparta, formed an essential part of his plan.

‡ Xenoph. *ibid.*

His laws
concerning
property.

This equitable distribution of power was accompanied, we are told, with an exact division of property. At the distance of five centuries, it was the current tradition in Greece, that Lycurgus had totally altered the situation and circumstances of his countrymen, by the introduction of an agrarian law, similar to that which has been so often, but always so ineffectually, proposed in other republics, as the surest foundation of liberty and happiness. Yet

Equal di-
vision of
lands

the equal division of lands, or, in other words, the community of landed property, and the annual partition of the harvest, took place among the original inhabitants of Greece as well as among the freeborn warriors of ancient Germany. It may be supposed therefore, with a high degree of probability, that the Spartans, in the time of Lycurgus, still preserved some traces of their primitive institutions, and that their minds were comparatively untainted with the vices of avarice and luxury. To bring them back, however, to the perfect simplicity of the heroic ages, and to prevent their future degeneracy, the territory of Laconia was divided into thirty-nine thousand portions, each producing eighty-two medimni, or bushels, of barley, with a proportional measure of fruits, wine, and oil. The rich pasture ground was probably left in common. The kings as in the age of Homer, enjoyed their separate* domain, conferred by the voluntary gratitude of their subjects. The senators, contented with an increase of power and honour, neither obtained nor desired any pre-eminence of fortune. Their moderation in this respect afforded a salutary example to the people, the greater part of whom would naturally be gainers by the agrarian law, while the few who were rich, for that relative term always implies the smaller number, submitted without resistance to the wisdom of Lycurgus, and the authority of Apollo.

* The *εσπερος*. Xenophon tells us, that it was always well watered; it probably consisted, as in Homer's time, *φυτὰς καὶ ἀρούρας* of plantations and corn land.

The equal division of land seemed not alone sufficient to introduce an equality in the manner of life, and to banish the seeds of luxury. The accumulation of moveable, or what the Greeks called invisible property,* might enable the rich to command the labour of the poor, and, according to the natural progress of wants and inventions, must encourage the dangerous pursuit of elegance and pleasure. The precious metals had long been the ordinary measures of exchange in Sparta, and, could we credit a very doubtful tradition, had greatly accumulated in private hands. Lycurgus withdrew from farther circulation all this gold and silver, a considerable part of which probably repaid his gratitude to the Delphic oracle, while the remainder increased the splendour of the Lacedæmonian temples. Instead of these precious metals, the Spartans received pieces of iron, which had been heated red in the fire, and afterwards quenched in vinegar, in order to render them brittle, and useless for every other purpose but that of serving as the current specie.

Astonishing, says Xenophon and Plutarch, were the effects of this operation. With the banishment of gold and silver were banished all the pernicious appetites which they excite, and all the frivolous arts which they introduce and nourish. Neither fortune-teller, nor physician, nor sophist, were longer to be seen in Sparta; gaudy trinkets and toys, and all useless finery in dress and furniture, at once disappeared; and the innocence and dignity of Spartan manners corresponded with the primitive simplicity of the iron money. But to reduce to the standard of truth or probability this very fanciful description, it may be observed, that the usefulness and scarcity of iron rendered it, in early times, a very ordinary and convenient measure of exchange. As such it was frequently employed in the heroic ages;† as such it long continued at Byzantium,‡ and other Grecian cities.|| The necessity of cooling it in an acid, in order to diminish its worth, indicates its high value even in the time of Lycurgus. The

Introduc-
tion of iron
money.

Effect of
these in-
stitutions.

* ΟυσΙΑ ΑΦΑΝΗΣ. See Lysias, *passim*.

† Aristoph. *Nubes*.

† Homer, *passim*.

‡ Plut. in *Lysand*.

alteration of the specie, therefore, probably appeared not so violent a measure as later writers were inclined to represent it; nor could the abolition of gold and silver abolish such elegancies and refinements as surely had no existence in Greece during the age of the Spartan legislator. But it may reasonably be believed, that the use of iron money, which continued permanent in Sparta alone, after the vices of wealth and luxury had polluted the rest of Greece, necessarily repelled from the republic of Lycurgus the votaries of pleasure, as well as the slaves of gain, and all the miserable retinue of vanity and folly.

Principle of *That* wealth is little to be coveted, even by the most selfish, which neither gratifies vanity nor flatters the desire of power, nor promises the means of pleasure. Upon the smallest abstraction, if avarice were at all capable of abstraction, the most sordid might sympathize with the contempt for superfluous riches, which could never be applied to any purpose, either useful or agreeable. What effort could the generosity of that people require, (if the indifference of the Spartans deserve the name of generosity,) among whom all valuable objects were equally divided, or enjoyed in common? * Among whom it was enjoined by the laws, and deemed honourable by the citizens, freely to communicate their arms, horses, instruments of agriculture and hunting; to eat together at common and frugal tables, agreeably to the institutions of Crete, as well as the practice of the heroic ages; to disregard every distinction but that of personal merit; to despise every luxury but that of temperance; and to disdain every acquisition but that of the public esteem?

Ordinary The general and firm assent to the divine mission of Lycurgus might excite the most generous and manly sentiments in the minds of his countrymen.

The persuasive force of his eloquence, assisted by the lyric genius of Thales, a poet worthy of Apollo and his missionary, † might enable the legislator to complete his beneficial and extensive plan. But there was reason to apprehend

* Xenoph. *ibid.* c. vi.

† Plut. in *Lycurg.*

lest the system of Lycurgus, like most schemes of reformation, should evaporate with the enthusiasm which produced it, unless the mortifications which it enjoined were rendered habitual to practice, and familiar to fancy. His laws were few and short; for the sake of memory, they were conceived in verse; they were not consigned to writing, but treasured in the *hearts* of his disciples as the immediate dictates of heaven. The Lacedæmonians were severely prohibited from the contagious intercourse of strangers, except at the stated returns of religious solemnities. Lycurgus, who had assisted Iphitus in restoring the Olympic games, instituted similar, though less splendid, festivals in his native country. When unemployed in the serious business of war, the Lacedæmonians were continually engaged in assemblies for conversation and the gymnastic exercises, or in religious and military amusements. Agriculture and the mechanic arts were left to the servile hands of the Helots, under which appellation were comprehended (as will be explained hereafter) various hostile communities that successively fell under the dominion of Sparta, and whose personal labour was regarded as the common property of the public.* The sciences of war and government were recommended by the laws of Lycurgus, as the only pursuits deserving the attention of freemen.

In knowledge and practice of war the Lacedæmonians (if we believe Xenophon who had fought with Their military institutions. and against them) far excelled all Greeks and Barbarians. Courage, the first quality of a soldier, was enlivened by every motive that can operate most powerfully on the mind, while cowardice was branded as the most odious and destructive of crimes, on the principle that it tended not, like many other vices, merely to the hurt of individuals, but to the servitude and ruin of the community. The Spartans preserved the use of the same weapons and defensive armour that had been adopted in the heroic ages; reducing only the length, and

* *Και τροπον πινυ δημοσιους ειχον δουλους.* "And in some measure, they," the Lacedæmonians, "had public slaves." Strabo. See likewise Aristot. Repub. l. ii. c. 5.

thereby improving the strength of the sword, which was two-edged, pointed, massy, and fitted either by cutting or thrusting, to inflict a dangerous wound.* Their troops were divided into regiments, consisting of five hundred and twelve men, subdivided into four companies, and each of these into smaller divisions commanded by their respective officers; for it was peculiar to the Lacedæmonian armies to contain comparatively few men not entrusted with some share of subordinate command.† The soldiers were attended by a multitude of artisans and slaves, who furnished them with all necessary supplies, and accompanied by a long train of priests and poets, who flattered their hopes, and animated their valour. A body of cavalry always preceded their march; sensible of the weakness of angles, they encamped in a circular form: the order of their guards and watches was highly judicious; they employed for their security, out-sentries and vedettes; and regularly, every morning and evening, performed their customary exercises. Xenophon has described with what facility they wheeled in all directions; converted the column of march into an order of battle; and, by skilful and rapid evolutions, presented the strength‡ of the line to an unexpected assault. When *they* found it prudent to attack, the king, who usually rose before dawn, to anticipate, by early prayer and sacrifice,||

* Vid. Pollux. voc. ξυηλον.

† Thucydides, who remarks this peculiarity, l. v. p. 390. assigns the reason of it, that the care of the execution might pertain to many. The whole Lacedæmonian army, except a few, consisted, he says, in *αρχοντες αρχοντων και το επιμελες του δραμενου πολλοις προσηκει*. It is necessary to observe, that the account given by Thucydides, in this passage, of the composition of the Lacedæmonian armies, differs materially from that of Xenophon. I have preferred the latter, first, because Xenophon writes expressly on the subject, of which Thucydides speaks incidentally in describing a particular battle; secondly, because the observations of Xenophon relate to the age of Lycurgus, those of Thucydides to the time of the Peloponnesian war: thirdly, because, as will appear in the sequel, Xenophon had a better opportunity than any other stranger, of being thoroughly acquainted with the affairs of Lacedæmon.

‡ The Lacedæmonian tactics will be explained more particularly hereafter.

|| *Ου χρη παννυχιον ευδειν βοηληφορον ανδρα*

Οι λαοι επιτετραφεται και τοσσα μεμηλε.

Lycurgus, never losing sight of Homer, converted his advices into laws.

the favour of the gods, communicated his orders to charge in a full line, or in columns, according to the nature of the ground, and the numbers and disposition of the enemy. In the day of battle, the Spartans assumed an unusual gaiety of aspect; and displayed in their dress and ornaments more than their wonted splendour. Their long hair was arranged in simple elegance; their scarlet uniforms, and brazen armour, diffused bright gleams around them. As they approached the enemy, the king sacrificed anew; the music struck up; and the soldiers advanced with a slow and steady pace, and with a cheerful but deliberate countenance, to what they were taught to regard as the noblest employment of man. Proper officers were appointed to receive the prisoners,* to divide the spoil, and to decide the contested prizes of valour. Both before and after, as well as during, the action, every measure was conducted with such order and celerity, that a great captain declares, when he considered the discipline of the Spartans, that all other nations appeared to him but children in the art of war.*

But that continual exercise in arms, which improved the skill and confirmed the valour, must gradually have exhausted the strength of Sparta, unless the care of population had formed an object of principal concern in the system of Lycurgus. Marriage was directly enjoined by some very singular institutions;† but still more powerfully encouraged by extirpating its greatest enemies, luxury and vanity. But Lycurgus, not contented with maintaining the populousness of Sparta, endeavoured to supply the past generation with a nobler and more warlike race, and to enlarge and elevate the bodies and minds of men to that full proportion of which their nature is susceptible. The credulous love of wonder has always been eager to assert, what the vanity of every age has been unwilling to believe, that the ancient inhabitants of the world possessed a measure of size and strength, as well

Means by which Lycurgus maintained the populousness, and increased the strength, of Sparta.

* Xenoph. de Repub. Spart.

† Bachelors were debarred from assisting at the female dances. They were compelled to walk naked through the streets in the winter solstice; singing a ludicrous song, which confessed the justice of their punishment.

as of courage and virtue, unattainable and unknown amidst the corruptions and degeneracy of later times. The frequent repetition of the same romantic tale renders giants and heroes familiar and insipid personages in the remote history of almost every people: but, from the general mass of fable, a just discernment will separate the genuine ore of Homer and Lycurgus. The laws of the latter brought back the heroic manners which the former had described; and their effects, being not less permanent than salutary, are, at the distance of many centuries, attested by eye witnesses, whose unimpeached veracity declares the Spartans superior to other men in the excellences of mind and body.*

His regulations concerning women, marriage, and children.

Of this extraordinary circumstance, the evidence of contemporary writers could scarcely convince us, had they barely mentioned the fact, without explaining its cause. But in describing the system of Lycurgus, they have not omitted his important regulations concerning the intercourse between the sexes, women, marriage, and children, whose welfare was, even before their birth, a concern to the republic. The generous and brave, it is said, produce the brave and good; but the physical qualities of children still more depend on the constitution of their parents. In other countries of Greece, the men were liberally formed by war, hunting, and the gymnastic exercises; but the women were universally condemned to drudge in sedentary and ignoble occupations, which enfeebled the mind and body. Their chief employment was to superintend, more frequently to perform, the meanest offices of domestic economy, and to prepare by the labour of their hands, food and raiment for themselves and families. Their diet was coarse and sparing; they abstained from the use of wine; they were deprived of liberal education, and debarred from fashionable amusements. Women, thus degraded by servility, appeared incapable of giving good sons to the republic, which Lycurgus regarded as a principal duty of the Lacedæmonian females. By the insti-

* As to the mind, the Spartans were, says Xenophon, *ευπειθεστροι, και αιδημονεστροι, και ὡν δευ εγκρατεστροι*. Ibid. c. iii. And as to the body, *διαφεροντας και κατα μεγαθος και κατα ιχυν ανδρας εν Σπαρτη, αποτελεσεν*. Ibid.

tutions of Sparta, therefore, the working of wool, the labours of the loom and needle, and other mean mechanical arts, were generally committed to servile hands. The free-born women enjoyed and practised those liberal exercises and amusements, which were elsewhere considered as the peculiar privilege of men; they assisted at the public solemnities, mingled in general conversation, and dispensed that applause and reproach, which dispensed by them are always most effectual.* Hence they became not only the companions, but the judges of the other sex; and, except that their natural delicacy was not associated to the honours of war, they enjoyed the benefit without feeling the restraint of the Spartan laws.

The restoration of the natural rights of women restored moderation and modesty in the intercourse between the sexes. Marriage though enjoined as a duty, could only be contracted in the full vigour of age; and these simple institutions had a more salutary influence on the physical improvement of the Spartans, than either the doubtful expedient, which prevailed among them to the latest times, of adorning the women's apartments with the finest statues of gods and heroes, that, by frequently contemplating these graceful images, they might produce fairer offspring; or the unnatural and detestable cruelty of exposing delicate or deformed children, a practice strongly recommended by Lycurgus, and silently approved, or faintly blamed, by the greatest philosophers of antiquity.

Even in a moral view, the character of Spartan Education, mothers must have been highly beneficial to their sons; since much of the happiness of life depends on the first impressions of our tender years. When boys were emancipated from the jurisdiction of women, they were not entrusted, as in other parts of Greece, to the mercenary tuition of slaves, who might degrade their sentiments, and corrupt their morals. The education of youth, as an office of the highest confidence, was

* This, likewise, was the business of women in the heroic ages.

Ἀλλὰ μάλα αἰνῶς
Αἰδεσθαι Τρῶας καὶ Τρῳάδας ἐλκεσιπέπλους,
Αἶχε, παῖδες ὧς, νοσφιν ἀλυσσάω πολέμου.

Il. l. vi. ver. 443.

committed to those who had enjoyed, or who were entitled to enjoy, the most splendid dignities of the republic; after the example of ancient times, when Phoenix educated Achilles, and when it was reasonably required that the master should himself possess the virtues with which he undertook to inspire his disciples. The Spartan youth were taught music and drawing: the former of which comprehended the science not only of sounds, but of number and quantity: they were taught to read and speak their own language with graceful propriety; to compose in prose and verse; above all, to think, and in whatever they said, even during the flow of unguarded conversation, to accommodate the expression to the sentiment.* Their sedentary studies were relieved by the orchestric and gymnastic exercises, the early practice of which might qualify them for the martial labours of the field. For this most important business of their manhood, they were still further prepared, by being inured, even in their tender years, to a life of hardship and severity. They wore the same garment summer and winter; they walked bare-footed in all seasons; their diet was plain and frugal, and for the most part so sparing, that they seized every favourable opportunity to supply the defect. What they were unable to ravish by force, they acquired by fraud. When their theft (if theft can be practised where separate property is almost unknown) was discovered, they were severely punished; but if their dexterous deceit escaped observation, they were allowed to boast of their success, and met with due applause for their activity, vigilance, and caution; which indicated a character well fitted to excel in the useful stratagems of war.†

Peculiar discipline of the youth After attaining the ordinary branches of education, youth are frequently left the masters of their own actions. Of all practical errors, Lycurgus, deemed this the most dangerous. His discernment perceived

* In the smart pithy sentences, or apothegms, for which the Spartans were famous, the thought is sometimes elegant, and sometimes ingenious; but their merit depends for the most part on the observance of the rule in the text. See Plut. Apoth.

† Besides Xenophon and Plutarch, see, for the Spartan education, Plato in Protagor.

the value of that most important period of life, which intervenes between childhood and virility; and the whole force of his discipline was applied to its direction and improvement. Instead of being loosened from the usual ties of authority, the Spartans, at the age of adolescence, were subjected to a more rigorous restraint; and the most extraordinary expedients were employed to moderate the love of pleasure, to correct the insolence of inexperience, and to control the headstrong impetuosity of other youthful passions. Their bodies were early familiarized to fatigue, hunger, and watching; their minds were early accustomed to difficulty and danger. The laborious exercise of the chase formed their principal amusement: at stated times, the magistrates took an account of their actions, and carefully examined their appearance. If the seeds of their vicious appetites had not been thoroughly eradicated by a life of habitual toil and temperance, they were subjected to corporal punishment, which it was their custom to endure with patient fortitude. The maxims of honour were instilled by precept, and enforced by example. The public tables, which were frequented by all ages, served as so many schools of wisdom and virtue, where, on ordinary occasions, but more particularly on days of festivity, the old related their ancient exploits, and boasted their past prowess; those in the vigour of life displayed the sentiments which their manly courage inspired; and the young expressed a modest confidence that, by steadfastly adhering to the precepts of Lycurgus, they might be enabled in due time to equal, perhaps surpass, the glory of both.

But the desire of emulating the fame of their illustrious ancestors was not the most ardent principle that animated the minds of the rising generation. They were taught to vie with each other in every agreeable and useful accomplishment. As they were trained and disciplined in separate classes, according to their respective ages of childhood, adolescence, and virility,* their characters were exactly as-

* I have chosen these words to express the successive ages of the *παις*, *μυρακιον*, *εφηβο*. They continued *ηβαιωντες*, till 46, which was reckoned by the Greeks and Romans the beginning of old age. Vid. Cic. de Senectute.

certained and fully known : and the rewards and honours gradually bestowed on them, were apportioned to the various degrees of excellence which they had previously discovered. When they attained the verge of manhood, three youths of superior merit were named by the Ephori, that they might respectively choose, each an hundred of their companions, who should be entitled to the honourable distinction of serving in the cavalry. The reasons of preference and rejection were openly explained ; and the youths who had been set aside, became, from that moment, the rivals and opponents both of the electors and of the elected. At home and abroad, in the assemblies for conversation and exercise, in the gymnastic and musical contests, in their military expeditions, as well as their martial amusements, the two parties displayed the utmost emulation and ardour, the one to regain the equality which they had lost, the other to maintain their ascendancy. They seldom rencountered in the streets or walks, without discovering their animosity in mutual defiances, often in blows. But these quarrels were not dangerous, either to the quiet of the public, or to the persons of individuals, because the combatants were obliged to separate (under the pain of punishment and disgrace) at the peaceful summons of every by-stander ; and the respected admonitions of age controlled, on such occasions, the youthful fermentation of turbulent passions.

The paternal authority in Sparta. The reverence for aged wisdom, which formed the prevailing sentiment of the heroic times, was restored by the legislation of Lycurgus, and employed as a main pillar of his political edifice. The renovation of limited government, the equal partition of lands, and the abolition of wealth and luxury, had removed the artificial sources of half the miseries and disgrace of human kind. But Lycurgus considered his system as incomplete, until he had levelled not only the artificial, but many of the natural inequalities, in the condition of his fellow-citizens. The fears and infirmities of the old were compensated by honour and respect ; the hopes and vigour of the young were balanced by obedience and restraint. The difference of years thus occasioned little disproportion of enjoyment ; the happiness of every

age depended on virtuous exertion ; and as all adventitious and accidental distinctions were removed, men perceived the importance of personal merit, and of its reward, the public esteem, and eagerly grasped the advantages which glory confers ; the only exclusive advantages which the laws of Lycurgus permitted them to enjoy. The paternal authority,* which maintained the discipline, and promoted the grandeur of Rome, was firmly established at Sparta, where every father might exercise an unlimited power, over not only his own, but the children of others, who were all alike regarded as the common sons of the republic. This domestic superiority naturally prepared the way for civil pre-eminence : the elective dignities of the state were obtained only by men of experienced wisdom ; and it required sixty years of laborious virtue to be entitled to a seat in the senate-house, the highest ambition of the Spartan chiefs. Such regulations, of which it is impossible to mistake the spirit, had a direct tendency to produce moderation and firmness in the public councils, to control the too impetuous ardour of a warlike people, to allay the ferment of domestic faction, and to check the dangerous ambition of foreign conquest. The power of the magistrate was confounded with the authority of the parent ; they mutually assisted and strengthened each other, and their united influence long upheld the unshaken fabric of the Spartan laws, which the old felt it their interest to maintain, and the young deemed it their glory to obey.

Such were the celebrated institutions of Lycurgus, which are eminently distinguished by the simplicity of their design, the exact adaption of their parts, and the uniform consistence of the whole, from the political establishments of other countries, which are commonly the irregular and motley production of time and accident. Without a careful examination of the whole system, it is impossible to seize the spirit of particular laws. But if the whole be attentively considered, we shall perceive that they contain nothing so original or so singular as is generally

Coincidence of the institutions of Lycurgus with those of the heroic ages.

* The "patria potestas."

believed. From the innumerable coincidences that have been remarked between the heroic and the Spartan discipline, there seems sufficient ground to conclude that the one was borrowed from the other ; and if we accurately contemplate the genius of both, we may discern that they tended not (as has been often said) to stop and interrupt, but only to divert, the Spirit of both. the natural current of human propensities and passions. The desire of wealth and of power, of effeminate ease, of frivolous amusements, and of all the artificial distinctions and enjoyments of polished society, are only so many ramifications of the love of action and of pleasure ; passions which it would be impossible to eradicate, without destroying the whole vigour of the mind. Yet these propensities, which it is often the vain boast of philosophy to subdue, policy may direct to new and more exalted objects. For the sordid occupations of interest, may be substituted the manly pursuits of honour ; the love of virtuous praise may control the desire of vicious indulgence ; and the impressions of early institution, confirmed by example and habit, may render the great duties of life its habitual employment and highest pleasure.

Fate of the Spartan institutions. Such a condition of society seems the utmost elevation and grandeur to which human nature can aspire. The Spartans attained, and long preserved, this state of exaltation ; but several circumstances and events, which the wisdom of Lycurgus* had foreseen, but which no human power could prevent, undermined the foundation of their greatness and felicity. Their military prowess gave them victory, slaves and wealth ; and though individuals could feel only the pride of virtue, and enjoy only the luxury of glory, the public imbibed the spirit of rapacity and the ambition of conquest. As in other countries the vices of individuals corrupt the community, in Laconia the vices of the public corrupted individuals. This unfortunate tendency was increased by the inequality of the cities originally subject to the Lacedæmonians.

* Lycurgus had formed Sparta for defence, not for conquest. He expressly forbade them to pursue a flying enemy ; he forbade them to engage frequently in war with the same people. Both injunctions were violated in the Messenian wars.

dæmonian laws. Sparta, the capital, contained nearly a fourth part of the inhabitants of the whole territory; the rest were divided among thirty, and afterwards eighteen subordinate towns.* The superior numbers of the Spartans enlarged their sphere of competition, and increased their ardour of emulation. They soon surpassed their neighbours not only in valour and address, but in dignity and in power. All matters of importance were decided in the lesser assembly; the greater was seldom summoned; and the members of the former, instead of continuing the equals, became the masters, and at length the tyrants, of their Lacedæmonian brethren. The usurpation of power fomented their desire of wealth: several lots were accumulated by the same persons as early as the Persian war;† and the necessity of defending their possessions and their authority, against men who had arms in their hands and resentment in their hearts, rendered their government uncommonly rigid and severe. The slaves, the freemen,‡ the tenants of the Laconian territory, and even such of the inhabitants of the capital as, on account of their poverty, cowardice, or any other disgraceful circumstance, were debarred from the dignities of the republic,|| testified the keenest animosity against the stern pride of the Spartan magistrates, and to use the lively but indelicate expression of Xenophon, would have “devoured them raw.”§ The Spartans, however, still maintained their superiority by force or by fraud, by seasonable compliance, or by prompt and judicious severity. By dividing the strength, they disarmed the fury of their enemies, and the flames of domestic discord were eclipsed in the splendour of

* Strabo, l. viii.

† Demaratus told Xerxes that there were but eight thousand Spartan lots (Herodot.) and about a century afterwards their number was reduced to one thousand. Aristot. Polit.

‡ So I have translated the word *νεοδαμωδεις*, on the authority of Thucydides, l. v. *δυναται το νεοδαμωδες ελευθερον ηδη ειναι*. The resentment even of the freedmen proves the intolerable severity of the government.

|| They were called *υπομειονες*, inferiors in opposition of the *ομοιοι*, or peers.

§ Xenophon Hellen. l. iii.

foreign conquest, by which both the magistrates and the subjects were enriched and corrupted: yet amidst civil discord and political degeneracy, they still preserved their religious and military institutions, as well as their invaluable plan of education; and their transactions, even in the latest ages of Greece, will furnish an ample and honourable commentary on the laws of Lycurgus.

Last trans-
action of
Lycurgus.

Concerning this extraordinary man, only one farther* circumstance is recorded with any appearance of authenticity; a circumstance highly descriptive both of his own character, and of that of the age in which he lived. Having beheld the harmonious movement of the machine, which he had so skilfully contrived, he summoned an assembly, and declared, that now he had but one new regulation to propose, upon which, however, it was first necessary to consult the oracle of Delphi; that meanwhile, his countrymen, who had seen the success of his labours, must engage that no alteration should take place before his return. The king, the senate, and the people, ratified the engagement by a solemn oath. Lycurgus undertook his journey; the oracle predicted the happiness which the Spartans should enjoy under his admirable laws: the response was transmitted to his country whither Lycurgus himself determined never more to return, convinced that the duration of the government which he had established, would be better secured by the eternal sanctity of an oath, than by the temporary influence of his own personal interference.

* Some contradictory traditions concerning his death are preserved in Plut. in Lycurg. & Justin. l. iii.

CHAP. IV.

State of Greece after the Abolition of Royalty.—Description of Laconia and Messenia. Causes of the War between those States.—Invasion of Messenia.—Distress of the Messenians.—The horrid Means by which they endeavour to remedy it.—They obtain Assistance from Argos and Arcadia.—Their Capital taken by the Spartans.—Issue of the first Messenian War.—State of Greece.—The Colony of Tarentum founded.—The second Messenian War.—Character and Exploits of Aristomenes.—The Distress of the Spartans.—They obtain Assistance from Athens.—The Poet Tyrtæus.—Subjugation of Messenia.—Future Fortunes of its Citizens.—Their Establishment in Sicily.

HAD the Greeks remained subject to kings, it is probable that they would have continued longer to exert their united valour against the surrounding Barbarians. The successful adventures of the Argonauts, the glorious, though wasting, expedition against Troy, would have animated the emulation and the hopes of succeeding candidates for fame; and the whole nation, being frequently employed in distant and general enterprises, would, through the habits of mutual intercourse, and the natural tendency of military subordination, have been gradually moulded into one powerful monarchy. This revolution would have given immediate tranquillity to Greece, but destroyed the prospect of its future grandeur. The honourable competitions of rival provinces must have ceased with their political independence; nor would the Greeks have enjoyed an opportunity of acquiring, by a long and severe apprenticeship in arms, that disciplined valour which eminently distinguished them above other nations of antiquity. In most countries it has been observed, that, before the introduction of regular troops,

State of
Greece
after the
abolition of
monarchy.

the militia of the borders far excel those of the central provinces. Greece, even under its kings, was divided into so many independent states, that it might be regarded as consisting entirely of frontier. Under the republican form of government, it was still more subdivided; and motives of private ambition now co-operating with reasons of national animosity, wars became more frequent, and battles more bloody and more obstinate. It is little to be regretted, that scarcely any materials remain for describing the perpetual hostilities between the Thebans and the Athenians; between the latter and the Peloponnesians; between the Phocians and Thessalians; and, in general, between each community and its nearest neighbour. The long and spirited contest between the Lacedæmonians and Messenians, is the only war of that age which produced permanent effects. The relation of this obstinate struggle has happily come down to us, accompanied with such circumstances as paint the condition of the times, and answer the main ends of history.

Description of Laconia. The territories of Laconia and Messenia occupied the southern division of the Peloponnesus. The shores of Laconia were washed by the eastern or the Ægean; those of Messenia,* by the western, or the Ionian, sea. The former country extended forty miles from east to west, and sixty from north to south. The ground, though roughened by mountains, like the rest of the Peloponnesus, abounded in rich and fertile valleys, equally adapted to the purposes of cultivation and pasture. The whole country was anciently called Hecatonpolis,† from its hundred cities. They were reduced to the number of thirty,‡ as early as the time of Lycurgus. The decay or destruction of Helos, Amyclæ, Pharis, and Geronthæ, and other less considerable towns, gradually increased the populousness of Sparta, the capital, situate near the centre of Laconia, and almost surrounded by the Eurotas. The

* Isocrat. in Archidam. calls the country Messenê; Pausanias, Messenia.

† Strabo, l. viii. p. 362. mentions this only as a hearsay; but it has been always repeated.

‡ Strabo says, "about thirty," and calls them *πολιὶδες*, oppidula, little towns.

other inland places of most note were Gerenea, Thurium and Sellasia. The sea-ports were Prasias, Cyphanta, Zarax; Limera, famous for its vines; and Gythium, whose capacious harbour was, in all ages, more than sufficient to contain the naval strength of Sparta.* In the time of Lycurgus, the free-men, of full age, amounted to thirty-nine thousand.† Those of full age, are generally reckoned a fourth part of the whole; so that the free inhabitants of Laconia may be computed at one hundred and fifty-six thousand; and the slaves, as will appear hereafter, probably exceeded four times that number.

Messenia was less extensive, but more fertile, Description than Laconia; and the former country, in ancient of Messenia. times, was proportionably more populous. Both kingdoms were principally supported by agriculture and pasturage, their subjects never having attained any high degree of improvement in arts, manufactures, or commerce. Messenia was, however, adorned by the sea-ports of Coroné, Pylus, Methonè, and Cyparyssus. The most considerable inland towns were Andania, the ancient capital; the strong fortress of Eira; the frontier town of Ampheia; and the celebrated Ithomé, near to the ruins of which was erected, by Epaminondas, the comparatively modern city of Messenét‡

As the countries of Laconia and Messenia were Spirit of government in both communities. both governed by kings of the family of Hercules, and both inhabited by subjects of the same Doric race, it might have been imagined that such powerful connexions would have disposed them to continue in a state of mutual friendship; or, if the ties of blood could not excite neighbouring states to a reciprocation of good offices, that they would at least have engaged them to maintain an inoffensive tranquillity. The different branches of the family of Hercules were induced by interest, as well as persuaded by affection, mutually to support each other. When the prerogative was invaded in any particular kingdom, it was natural for the neighbouring princes to defend the cause of royalty;* and we

* Strabo, l. viii. p. 363, &c. & Pausan. in Lacon.

† Plut. in Lycur.

‡ Pausan. in Messen, & Strabo, l. viii. p. 360, &c.

§ Isocrat. in Archidam.

find that on several occasions, they have engaged to assist each other in repressing the factious turbulence of the nobles, and the seditious spirit of the people. But when the influence of the family of Hercules declined with the abolition of monarchy in most countries of Greece, the capital of each little principality, which always enjoyed a pre-eminence in the national assemblies, began to usurp an unlimited authority over the neighbouring cities, and to control, by its municipal jurisdiction the general resolves of the community. Sparta had in this manner extended her power over the smaller towns of Laconia. The walls of Helos, whose inhabitants had pertinaciously resisted this usurpation, were leveled with the ground, the citizens reduced to the most miserable slavery, and a law enacted by the Spartan council, which forbade, under severe penalties, the emancipation of the Helots or the selling of them into foreign countries, where they might entertain the flattering hopes of regaining their lost liberty. The same tyrannical spirit which governed the measures of the Spartans, had taken possession of their neighbours the Messenians, and had urged the inhabitants of the capital to invade, conquer, and enslave, several of the smaller cities.

General causes of the war between them

While such ambitious principles prevailed with both nations, it was scarcely to be imagined that the more powerful should not exert its utmost strength to obtain dominion, and the weaker, its utmost courage and activity to preserve independence. Besides this general cause of animosity the rich fields of Messenia offered a tempting prize to the avarice of the Spartans; a circumstance continually alleged by the Messenians, as the principal motive which had induced their enemies to commence an unjust and unprovoked war. The Spartans however, by no means admitted this reproach. It was natural, indeed, that such differences should arise between the subjects of rival states as might furnish either party with a plausible pretence for taking arms. These differences it will be proper briefly to relate, after premising, that although the Greek historians mention *three* Messenian wars, the *third* had little resemblance, either in its object, or in its effect, to the first and second. These

were the general struggles of a warlike people for preserving their hereditary freedom and renown, while the third, though dignified with the same appellation, was only an unsuccessful revolt of slaves from their masters.

On the confines of Messenia and Lacedæmon stood an ancient temple of Diana, which, being erected at the common expense, was open to the prayers and sacrifices of the two nations. Hither, according to annual custom, repaired a select band of Spartan virgins to solemnize the chaste rites of their favourite divinity. A company of Messenian youths arrived at the same time to perform their customary devotion, and to implore the protection of the warlike goddess. Inflamed by the beauty of the Spartan females, the Messenians equally disregarded the sanctity of the place, and the modest character of Diana, whose worship they came to celebrate. The licentious youths, after vainly attempting by the most ardent prayers and vows, to move the stern inflexibility of Spartan virtue, had recourse to brutal violence in order to consummate their fatal designs; fatal to themselves, to their country, and to the unhappy victims of their fury, who unwilling to survive so intolerable a disgrace, perished miserably by their own hands.*

To this enormity on the part of the Messenians, succeeded another of a more private nature, on that of the Lacedæmonians. Polychares was a Messenian of noble birth, of great wealth, conspicuous for the virtues of public and private life, and renowned for his victories in the Olympic games. The property of Polychares, like that of the most opulent of his countrymen, chiefly consisted in numerous herds of cattle; part of which he intrusted to a Lacedæmonian, of the name of Euephnus, who undertook, for a stipulated reward, to feed them on the rich meadows which he possessed on the Lacedæmonian coast. The avarice of Euephnus was not restrained by the sense of duty, the principles of honour, or the sacred ties

Euephnus, the Lacedæmonian, defrauds the Messenian Polychares. Olymp. ix. 1. A. C. 774.

* Pausan. in Messen. p. 222. The Messenians denied this whole transaction, and substituted a more improbable story in its stead. Pausan. ibid.

of hospitality. Having sold the cattle to foreigners, who often came to purchase that article in Laconia, he travelled to the Messenian capital, and visiting his friend Polychares, lamented the loss of his property by the incursion of pirates.

The frequency of such events would, probably assassinate his son. have concealed the fraud; but a slave, whom Euephnus sold along with the cattle, having escaped the vigilance of his new masters, arrived in time to undeceive the generous credulity of Polychares. The perfidious Lacedæmonian, seeing his contrivance thus unexpectedly disconcerted, endeavoured to deprecate the just resentment of his friend, by the most humiliating confession of his guilt, and by insisting on the temptation of gain, the frailty of nature,* the sincerity of his repentance, and earnest desire of making immediate restitution. Unfortunately, indeed, he had not any considerable sum of money in his possession; but if Polychares would allow his son to accompany him to Lacedæmon, he would put into the hands of the youth the full price which he had received for his father's property. On this occasion it is easier to pity the misfortune, than excuse the weakness of the Messenian. The youth had no sooner set foot on the Lacedæmonian territory than the traitor Euephnus stabbed him to the heart.

Polycharès takes vengeance on the Spartans. The afflicted father, assembling his friends and followers, travelled to Sparta, and implored the just vengeance of the laws against the accumulated guilt of perfidy and murder. In vain he repeatedly addressed himself to the kings, to the Ephori, to the senate, and to the assembly. The money, the eloquence, the intrigues of Euephnus, and, above all, his character of Spartan, prevailed over the impotent solicitations of a Messenian stranger. Polychares, provoked by the cruel disregard of the Lacedæmonians to his just demands, determined to return home; but having lost his understanding through rage and despair, he assaulted and slew several Spartan citizens whom he met on the road, and after thus quenching his resentment against the

* *Εν γὰρ τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει, καὶ ἄλλων ἐνόντων, ἐφ' οἷς βιάζομεθα ἀδικεῖν γινέσθαι, τὰ περὶ μεγίστην ἀναγκὴν ἔχει.* PAUSAN.

Et l'interet enfin père de tous les crimes. HENRIADE.

guilty in the blood of the innocent, he was conducted by the assistance of his friends to his native country.

He had not long returned to Andania, when ambassadors arrived from the Spartan senate demanding the person of such an atrocious and open offender. The Messenians assembled to deliberate on this request; and Androcles and Antiochus, who were jointly invested with the regal power, having differed, as usually happened, in their opinions, each prince was supported by the strength of a numerous faction. The debate was decided by an expedient often adopted in such tumultuary assemblies. Both parties had recourse to arms, and the sedition being fatal to Androcles, the opinion of Antiochus prevailed, who declared against delivering Polychares into the power of his enraged enemies. But Antiochus though he denied the unreasonable demand of the Spartan ambassadors, dismissed them with a proposal, which left them no room to complain of injustice. He offered, in the name of the Messenian assembly, to refer all differences between the two nations to the respected council of the Amphictyons. This equitable proposal, which ill suited the ambitious designs of Sparta, was not honoured with an answer from that republic, who desirous to acquire the rich fields of Messenia, prepared for taking arms; and, having completed her preparations, bound her citizens by oath, never to desist from hostility till they had effected their purpose.*

Without an open declaration of war (for ambition had extinguished every sentiment of piety) they invaded the Messenian frontier, and attacked the small town of Ampheia, which, from its advantageous situation on a rock, seemed equally proper for infesting the enemy, and securing their own retreat.†

The Spartan senate demands his person.

The Messenians refuse to comply, but offer to refer the dispute to the Amphictyons.

The Spartans surprise Ampheia. Olymp. ix. 2. A. C. 743.

* Strabo expresses this oath strongly, but oddly, *Ὁμοσάντες μὴ πρότερον ἐπανήξειν οἰκαδε, πρὶν ἢ Μεσσηνίην ἀνέλθω ἢ πάντας ἀποθάνειν*. "Having sworn not to return home before that they either took Messenē, or that they all died."

† Ὁρμηπηθριον ἐπιστηθειον. PAUSAN.

The time chosen for the assault was the dead of night, when the unsuspecting inhabitants reposed in full confidence of their accustomed security. There was neither sentinel at the gates, nor garrison within the place. The alarm was immediately followed by execution. Many Ampheians were assassinated in their beds; several fled to the altars of the gods, the sanctity of which proved a feeble protection against the Spartan cruelty; and a miserable remnant escaped to diffuse the melancholy tidings of their unexpected calamity.

Spirited resolutions of the Messenians. On this important emergency Euphaes, who had succeeded to the throne of his father Antiochus summoned a general assembly of his countrymen to the

plain of Stenyclara; where, after hearing the opinion of others concerning the critical situation of their affairs, he declared his own sentiments, which were full of honour and magnanimity: "That the final event of the war was not to be conjectured by its unfortunate beginning; the Messenians, though less inured to arms than their warlike opponents, would acquire both skill and courage in pursuing the measures of a just defence, and the gods, protectors of innocence, would make the struggles of virtuous liberty prevail over the rude assaults of violence and ambition." The discourse of Euphaes was received with shouts of applause; and the Messenians, by advice of their king, abandoned the open country, and settled in such of their towns as were best fortified by art or nature, leaving the remainder to the invasion of an enemy, with whose bravery and numbers their own weakness was yet unable to contend. But while they kept within their walls, they continued to exercise themselves in arms, and to acquire such vigour and discipline, as might enable them to oppose the Spartans in the field. Four years elapsed from the taking of Ampheia before they ventured to embrace this dangerous measure. During all that time, the Spartans made annual incursions into their country, destroying their harvests, and carrying into captivity such straggling parties as they happened to surprise. They took care, however, not to demolish the houses, to cut down the wood, or otherwise to disfigure or desolate a country, which they already regarded as their own.

The Messenians, on the other hand, as their courage continued to increase, were not contented with defending their own walls, but detached, in small parties, the boldest of their warriors to ravage the sea-coast of Laconia. Encouraged by the success of these predatory expeditions, Euphaes determined to take the field with the flower of the Messenian nation. The army of free-men was attended by an innumerable crowd of slaves, carrying wood and other materials necessary for encampment. Thus prepared, they put themselves in motion, and, before they reached the frontier, were seen by the Spartan garrison of Amphibia, who immediately sounded the alarm of an approaching enemy. The Spartans flew to arms with more than their wonted alacrity, delighted with the opportunity for which they had so long wished in vain, of deciding, at one blow, the event of a tedious war. The hostile armies approached with a celerity proportioned to the fury of their resentment, and arrived, with high expectations, at the intermediate plain which overspread the confines of the two kingdoms. But there, the martial ardour of the troops received a check, which had not been foreseen by their commanders. The rivulet, intersecting the plain, was swelled by the rains into a torrent. This circumstance prevented a general engagement. The cavalry alone (amounting on either side to about five hundred horse) passed near the head of the ravine, and contended in an indecisive skirmish: while the fury of the infantry evaporated in empty boasts and unavailing insults. Night insensibly came on, during which the Messenians fortified their camp with so much skill, that the enemy, rather than venture to storm it, preferred to return home, after an expedition, which, considering their superiority in numbers, appeared no less inglorious than ineffectual.

The pusillanimous behaviour of the Spartan army deserved not the approbation of the senate. The severe fathers of the republic upbraided the degeneracy of the youth, who no longer paid regard to the sanctity of the oath which they had taken, never to lay down their arms until they had completely subdued the Messenians.

Determine
to risk a
battle;
Olymp. x. i.
A. C. 740.

which
proves in-
decisive.

Spartans
prepare for
carrying on
the war
with vigour.

The spirit of the senate was soon diffused through the community ; and was determined, in the general assembly of the nation, to prepare for carrying on a more fierce war than the enemy had yet experienced. At the approach of Autumn, the season always preferred for the predatory expeditions of those early times, all the Spartans of military age, as well as the inhabitants of the subordinate towns of Laconia, known by the general name of Lacedæmonians, were ready to take the field. After leaving a sufficient body of troops for the internal safety of the country, the number that might be spared abroad probably amounted to about twenty thousand men. This powerful army was still farther increased by the confluence of strangers, particularly the Assinians and Dryopians, who fled from the cruel tyranny of Argos, a republic no less blameable than Sparta, for oppressive severity towards her weaker neighbours. Besides this reinforcement, the Spartans hired a considerable body of archers from Crete, to oppose the horse and light infantry of the Messenians. The management of the expedition was intrusted to the Spartan kings, Theopompus and Polydorus ; the former of whom commanded the right, and the latter the left wing, while the central division was committed to the discretion and valour of Euryleon, who, though born in Sparta, descended from the royal line of Theban Cadmus.

Second en- Ancient writers have neglected to mention the
gagement. scene of this second engagement, which Pausanias
Olymp. has, with more diffusiveness than accuracy, descri-
x. 2. bed in his historical journey through Messenia ; but
A. C. 739. it is reasonable to conjecture, from this omission, that both the first and second battles happened near the same place, on the extensive plain which connects the frontiers of the two kingdoms.

The Messenians were inferior, both in numbers and in discipline, but ardent in the cause of every thing most dear to them. Euphaes headed their left wing, which opposed the division of Theopompus ; Pytharatus led the right ; and Cleonnis commanded the centre. Before the signal was given for charge, the commanders addressed their respective troops.

Theopompus, with Laconic brevity, "reminded the Spartans of their oath, and of the glory which their ancestors had acquired by subduing the territories of their neighbours." Euphaes, at greater length, animated his soldiers to victory, by describing the fatal consequences of a defeat. "Their lands and fortunes were not the only objects of contention: they had already experienced the Spartan cruelty in the unhappy fate of Ampheia, where all the men of a military age had been put to the sword; the women, as well as the children, with their aged parents, subjected to an ignominious servitude; their temples burnt or plundered; the city levelled with the ground, and the country desolated. The calamities hitherto confined to that little district, would be diffused over the whole of their beautiful territory, unless the active bravery of Messenia should now, by a noble effort of patriotism, overcome the numbers and discipline of Sparta." Encouraged by the ardour of their prince, the Messenians rather ran than marched to the battle. As they approached the enemy, they threatened them with their eyes and gestures, reproaching them with an insatiable avidity for wealth and power, an unnatural disregard to the ties of blood, an impious indifference towards common paternal gods, and particularly for the revered name of Hercules, the acknowledged founder and patron of both kingdoms. From words of reproach they made an easy transition to deeds of violence. Many quitted their ranks, and assailed the embattled phalanx of the Spartans. The wounded spent the last exertions* of their strength in signal acts of vengeance, or employed their last breath in conjuring their companions to imitate the example of their bravery; and to maintain, by an honourable death, the safety and renown of their country. To the generous ardour of the Messenians, Sparta Fierceness and obstinacy of the combatants. opposed the assured intrepidity of disciplined valour. Her citizens, inured to the use of arms, closed their ranks, and remained firm in their respective posts. Where

* Agreeably to the melancholy firmness of the advice afterwards given by Tyrtæus to the Spartans,

Και τις ἀποθησκων ὕψατ' ἀνορέσασθαι.

TYRTÆUS, edit. Glasg. p. 4. ver. 6.

the enemy in any part gave way, they followed them with an undisturbed progress ; and endeavoured, by the continuance of regular exertion, to overcome the desultory efforts of rage, fury, and despair*.

Such were the principal differences in the sentiments and conduct of two armies, both of which were alike animated by the love of glory and the desire of vengeance ; passions which they carried to such a length, that there was no example, on either side, of a soldier who deigned to ask quarter, or who attempted to sooth, by the promise of a large ransom, the unrelenting cruelty of the victors. Emulation and avarice conspired in despoiling the bodies of the slain. Amidst this barbarous employment, which custom only rendered honourable, many met with an untimely fate ; for, while they stripped the dead with the rashness of blind avidity, they often exposed their own persons to the darts and swords of their enemies ; and sometimes the dying, by a fortunate wound, soothed the agonies of the present moment, and retaliated their past sufferings on their unguarded despoilers.

The kings, who had hitherto been satisfied with leading their troops to action, and sharing the common danger, longed, as the battle began to warm, to signalize their valour in single combat. With this design, Theopompus, listening only to his courage, first marched towards Euphaes, who, seeing him approach, cried out to his companions, “ Does not Theopompus, well imitate the bloody-minded Polynices,† who, at the head of an army of strangers, levied war against his native country, and, with his own hand, slew a brother, by whom, at the same instant, he himself was slain ? In like manner does Theopompus, with unnatural hatred, persecute his kinsmen of the race of Hercules ; but I trust he shall meet the punishment due to his impiety.” At sight of this interesting spectacle, the troops were

The Spartan and Messenian kings prepare to engage in single combat.

Prevented by the ardour of their troops.

* The mode of fighting in that age is forcibly described by Tyrtæus, p. 7. edit. Glasg. *Αλλα τις εν διαβας μενετο ποσι αμφοτεροισι, &c.* to the end of the poem.

† See above, p. 16.

inspired with new ardour, and the battle raged with redoubled fury. The chosen bands, who respectively watched the safety of the contending princes, became insensible to personal danger, and only solicitous to preserve the sacred persons of their kings. The strength of Sparta at length, began to yield to the activity of her rivals. The troops of Theopompus were broken and thrown into disorder: and the reluctant prince was himself compelled to retire. At the same time the right wing of the Messenians, having lost their leader Pytharatus, yielded to the exertions of Polydorus and his Spartans: but neither this general, nor king Euphaes thought proper to pursue the flying enemy. It seemed more expedient to strengthen, with their victorious troops, the central divisions of their respective armies, which still continued to fight with obstinate valour, and doubtful success. Night at length put an end to the engagement, which had proved hard and humiliating to both parties; for next morning neither offered to renew the battle, neither ventured to erect a trophy of victory; while both craved a suspension of arms, for the purpose of interring the dead; a demand generally construed as an acknowledgment of defeat.

Extraordi-
nary issue
of the bat-
tle.

Although the immediate effects of the battle were alike destructive to the Spartans and to the Messenians, its remote consequences were peculiarly ruinous to the latter. They were less rich and less numerous than their opponents; their army could not be recruited with the same facility; many of their slaves were bribed into the enemy's service; and a pestilential distemper, concurring with other misfortunes, reduced them to the last extremity of distress. The Spartans, mean while, carried on their annual incursions with more than usual cruelty, involving the husbandman, with his labours, in undistinguished ruin, and destroying by fire and sword the wretched inhabitants of the unfortified cities. The miseries and ravages to which these cities were continually exposed, obliged the Messenians to abandon them and to seek refuge among the almost inaccessible mountains of Ithomé; a place which, though situate near the fron-

Remote
consequen-
ces.

The Messenians shut themselves up in the fortress Ithomé.

tiers of Laconia, afforded them the securest retreat amidst their present calamities, being strongly fortified by nature, and surrounded by a wall, which bid defiance to the battering engines known in that early age.

Their sufferings there.

The Messenians, thus defended against external assaults, were still exposed to the danger of perishing by famine. The apprehension of this new calamity gave additional poignancy to the feelings of their unhappy situation, and increased the horrors of the pestilence which raged more fiercely than ever among men

cooped up within a narrow fortress. Under the pressure of present, and the dread of future evil, their minds were favourably disposed for admitting the terrors of superstition. A messenger was sent to Delphi to inquire by what sacrifice they might appease the resentment of the angry gods. On his return to Ithomé, he declared the stern answer of the god, which demanded the innocent blood of a virgin of the royal race.

Prepare to sacrifice a virgin of the royal blood.

The Messenians prepared in full assembly, to obey the horrid mandate. The lots were cast, and the daughter of Lyciscus was declared worthy of atoning, by her blood, for the sins of the prince and

people; but the father, who was only a distant branch of the royal family, allowed his paternal affection to prevail over the dictates of both his patriotism and his piety. By his advice, Ephebolus, a diviner, opposed the sacrifice, asserting that the pretended princess was not what she appeared, but a suppositious child, whom the artifice of the wife of Lyciscus had adopted, to conceal her barrenness. While the remonstrances

who is withdrawn by her father.

of the diviner engaged the attention of the assembly, Lyciscus privately withdrew his daughter; and, escaping unobserved through the gates of Ithomé, sought protection, against the cruelty of fortune and

of his friends, among the inveterate enemies of his country.

Aristodemus devotes his own daughter.

He had already made considerable progress in his journey towards Sparta, when the discovery of his departure threw the Messenians into great consternation; nor is it easy to determine what might have

been the effect of their superstitious terrors, had not Aristodemus, another branch of the Herculean stock, and not more distinguished by birth than merit, voluntarily offered to devote his own child for the public safety. But this sacrifice was likewise opposed by a youth, who, passionately in love with the intended victim, cried out, that she was his betrothed wife, and that it belonged to her destined husband, not to her inhuman father, to dispose of her life and fortune. When his noisy clamours were little regarded by the assembly, he had the effrontery to assert, that the daughter of Aristodemus could not answer the condition required by the oracle; that even before the nuptial rites had been celebrated, she had pitied the violence of his passion, and that now she carried in her womb the fruit of their unhappy loves. Aristodemus, hearing this declaration, was seized with rage and indignation at the unmerited disgrace thrown on his family. "It then appeared," says an ancient author,* "with what ease destiny tarnishes the feeble virtues of men, as a slime of a river does the shining ornaments which cover its humid bed." The angry father plunged his dagger into the breast of his unfortunate daughter, and, with horrid barbarity, opening her womb in the presence of the amazed assembly, demanded justice of the infamous impostor who had traduced her virtue. The Messenians were still farther irritated against the youth, in consequence of the opinion of Ephebolus, who declared that another victim must be sought to appease the anger of the gods, because Aristodemus had sacrificed his daughter, not in obedience to the oracle, but to gratify the impetuous passions of his own ungovernable soul. The rage of the assembly would have speedily sent the lover to attend the shade of his mistress; but fortunately he was beloved and pitied by king Euphaes, whose authority controlled on this occasion, the audacious insolence of a priest, and checked the wild fury of the populace. The king asserted that Apollo had no reason to complain of their disobedience: the god demanded

Her lover
opposes his
design.

She is slain
by her fa-
ther.

* Pausanias, p. 232. This might satisfy the superstition of antiquity, but will appear, in modern times, a poor excuse for such a shocking barbarity.

the blood of a virgin : a virgin had been slain : but neither did the Pythia determine, nor belonged it to them to inquire, by whose hand, or from what motive, the victim should be put to death.

Obstinate
defence of
the Messenians,

The oracle thus favourably interpreted by the wisdom of the prince, not only allayed the frantic rage, but restored the fainting hopes, of the people. They determined to defend their capital to the last extremity ; and this generous resolution, which they maintained inviolate during the course of several years, was justified by obstinate exertions of valour.

who procure
assistance from
Argos and
Arcadia.

The spirited and persevering efforts of the Messenians, as well as the proud tyranny of Sparta, tended to procure, to the weaker state, several useful alliances among the neighbouring republics. Of all the communities inhabiting the Peloponnesus, the Corinthians alone, as a maritime and commercial people, entertained little jealousy of the Spartans ; while the Argives and Arcadians, from proximity of situation, as well as interference of interest and ambition, held the disciples of Lycurgus in peculiar detestation. By the assistance of these powerful allies, the Messenians gained considerable advantage in two general engagements ; in the former of which their king Euphaes, betrayed by the ardour of success into an unequal combat was

Their transient
successes.

overpowered by numbers and slain in the action. The valour of Aristodemus was called by the voice of the people to fill the vacant throne ; and his conduct in war justified the high opinion entertained of him by his countrymen. For five years, he baffled the aspiring hopes of the Spartans ; defeated them in several desultory rencounters ; and, in a pitched battle, fought near the walls of Ithomé overcame the principle strength of their republic, assisted by that of the Corinthians.

This victory, though obtained by stratagem rather than by superiority of courage or discipline, threw the Spartan senate into the greatest perplexity, and deprived them of the expectation of putting a speedy, or even a fortunate end to the war.

In their distress they had recourse to the same oracle, which had relieved the affliction of the Messenians. As the policy of the god seldom sent away, in ill humour, the votaries of his shrine, the destruction of Ithomé was announced with prophetic obscurity. The Spartans, with revived hopes, again took the field; and their new ardour was successful in several skirmishes with the Messenians, who, harassed by an open, were till more fatally oppressed by a secret foe. The people were again seized with superstitious terrors. Dreams, visions, and other prodigies confirmed the melancholy prediction of Apollo. The impatient temper of Aristodemus made him withdraw, by a voluntary death, from the evils which threatened his country. The other leaders of greatest renown had perished in the field. Ithomé, deprived of its principal support, and invested more closely than before, was compelled, after a siege of five months, to submit to the slow but irresistible impressions of famine. Such of its inhabitants as were entitled to the benefit of hospitality in Sicyon, Argos, or Arcadia, travelled with all possible expedition into these countries. The sacred families who were attached to the ministry of Ceres, sought a secure refuge among the venerable priests of Eleusis, in Attica. The greater part of the people dispersed themselves through the interior towns and villages, endeavouring, in the obscurity of their ancient habitations to elude the industrious search of an unrelenting enemy.*

Ithomé at length surrenders. Olymp. xiv. 1. A. C. 724.

The Lacedæmonians, having thus obtained possession of the Messenian capital, displayed signal gratitude to their gods, fidelity to their allies, and cruelty to their enemies. Ithomé was demolished to the foundation. Of its spoils, three tripods were consecrated to Amyclean Apollo. The first was adorned with the image of Venus, the second with that of Diana, and the third with the figures of Ceres and Proserpine. To the Assinians, who had assisted them with peculiar alacrity in the war, the Spartans gave that beautiful portion of the Messenian coast,

Consequences of the first Messenian war.

* Pausan. Messen. & Strabo, l. viii.

which assumed, and long retained, the name of its new inhabitants. They rewarded the good intentions of the Messenian Androcles, who, at the commencement of the war had discovered his partiality for Sparta, by bestowing on his descendants the fertile district Hyamia. The rest of the Messenian nation were treated with all the rigour of Spartan policy. They were obliged to take an oath of allegiance to their proud victors, to present them every year with half the produce of their soil, and, under pain of the severest punishment, to appear in mourning habits, at the funerals of the Spartan kings and magistrates.*

State of Greece at that time. After the close of the first Messenian war, Greece appears, for several years, to have enjoyed an unusual degree of tranquillity. Peace promoted population; and the inhabitants of Peloponnesus continued to diffuse their numerous colonies over the islands of Sicily and Corcyra, as well as over the southern division of Italy, afterwards known by the name of Magna Græcia.† In this delicious country two considerable establishments were formed, about the same time, the one at Rhegium, the other at Tarentum. Rhegium, situate on the southern extremity of the continent, soon acquired the ascendant over the neighbouring cities: and Tarentum having become the most powerful community on the eastern coast, had the honour of giving name to the spacious bay, which penetrates so deeply into Italy, that it almost unites the Tuscan and the Ionian seas.

The particular causes which occasioned, or the various consequences which attended, those several migrations, are not related in ancient history; the Lacedæmonian establishment at Tarentum was alone marked by such circumstances as have merited, on account of their singularity, to be handed down to succeeding ages.

* Pausan. *ibid.*

† This name, as will be proved hereafter, denoted the Greek settlements both in Italy and Sicily. The colonies there became, in progress of time, perhaps more considerable than the mother country. Their proceedings will be fully related in the following work; but not until their transactions enter into the general system of Grecian politics.

During the second expedition* of the Spartans against Messenia, the army, consisting of the greater part of the citizens who had attained the military age, bound themselves by oath, not to return home till they had subdued their enemies. This engagement detained them several years in the field, during which period, Sparta, inhabited only by women, children, and helpless old men, produced no succeeding generation to support the future glories of the republic. Sensible of this inconvenience, which, in a warlike and ambitious state, surrounded by warlike and ambitious rivals, might have been productive of the most dangerous consequences, the senate recalled such young men as, having left their country before they had attained the military age, were not under any obligation to keep the field; and enjoined them to associate promiscuously with the married women, that the city might thus be preserved from decay and desolation. The children born of these useful, though irregular connexions, were distinguished by the name of *Partheniæ*; probably denoting the condition of their mothers.† They had no certain father; nor were they entitled, though citizens of Sparta, to any private inheritance. These circumstances kept them a distinct body, the members of which were attached by the strictest friendship to each other, and hostile to the rest of the community.

This dangerous disposition was still farther increased by the imprudent behaviour of the Spartans, who, on their return from the conquest of Messenia, treated the *Partheniæ* with scorn and contumely. The young men could endure poverty and misfortune, but could not brook disgrace. Their unhappy situation, and the impatience with which they submitted to it, naturally connected them with the Helots, those miserable slaves whose just indignation ever

* They had taken the same oath in the first expedition: but it appears from Pausanias, that they did not observe it. The senators upbraided the youth with cowardice and contempt of their oath, *δειλυν και του ορκου' υποτροφιαν*. PAUSAN. p. 228.

† *Παρθενιας*. Filius natus ex ea, quæ quum duceretur, virgo non erat. Conf. ARISTOT. Polit. l. v. c. 7. et. Epigram. apud Polluc.

The Lacedæmonians found Tarentum in Italy.

Conspiracy of the *Partheniæ* and Helots.

prompted them to revolt from the cruel tyranny of their masters. A conspiracy was formed; the day, place, and signal were determined, upon which the Partheniæ and Helots, armed with concealed daggers, and with the most hostile fury should retaliate in the public assembly, their past sufferings and insults on the unsuspecting superiority of the proud lords of Sparta. The time approached, and the design was ripe for execution, when the president of the assembly ordered the crier to proclaim, That none present should throw up his cap (for that had been the signal appointed by the conspirators;) and thus clearly intimated that the plot had been discovered, and that the Spartans were prepared to meet and to overcome the dangerous treachery of their dependants. We are not informed of the punishment inflicted on the Helots, or whether, as the conspiracy had been laid open by one of their number, the merit of an individual was allowed to atone for the guilt of the class. The Partheniæ, however, were treated with a remarkable degree of lenity, suggested probably, by the fears, rather than by the humanity of Sparta.* They were not only allowed to escape unpunished from their native country, but furnished with every thing necessary for undertaking a successful expedition against the neighbouring coasts; and thus enabled to establish themselves under their leader Phalantus, in the delightful recesses of the Tarentine gulf.†

The Messenians prepare to revolt.

Olymp. xxiii. 4.

A. C. 685.

The Spartans, when delivered from the danger of this formidable conspiracy, enjoyed, above thirty years, domestic as well as public peace, until again disturbed by the revolt of the Messenians. The dishonourable conditions imposed on that people, the toilsome labours to which most of them were necessarily condemned, in order to produce the expected tribute; the natural fertility of the soil, augmented by industry, and augmenting in its turn the populousness of the country; all these causes conspired to sharpen their resentment, to embitter their hostility, and to determine them at every hazard, to expose their fortune to the decision of the sword. The negligence of Sparta

* Ephor. apud. Strab. l. vi.

† Pausan. Phoc.

favoured the progress of rebellion. While she degraded the Messenians by the most humiliating marks of servitude, she allowed them, however, to rebuild their cities, to assemble in the public places, and to communicate to each other their mutual grievances and complaints. To reward the services of Androcles, the Messenian king, she had bestowed on his family the rich province of Hyamia; but the descendants of that prince, preferring the duties of patriotism to the dictates of gratitude, countenanced and encouraged the warlike dispositions of his countrymen. The young men of Andania longed to take up arms. They were headed by Aristomenes, a youth descended from the ancient line of Messenian kings, adorned with the most extraordinary qualities of mind and body, and whose exploits, if instead of being sung by Rhianus, and related by Pausanias, they had been described by Xenophon, or celebrated by Homer, would place him in the first rank of Grecian heroes.

In entering upon this memorable war, the Messenians consulted the dictates of prudence, at the same time that they obeyed the calls of animosity and ambition. Before discovering their intention to take arms, they despatched messengers to the Arcadians and Archives, intimating their inclination to throw off the yoke of Sparta, provided they could depend on the hearty assistance of their ancient allies. The Argives and Arcadians were naturally enemies to their warlike and ambitious neighbours; and at this particular juncture, the enmity of the former towards Sparta was, by recent injuries, kindled into resentment. Both nations confirmed, by the most flattering promises, the resolution of the Messenians, who, with uncommon unanimity and concert, sought deliverance from the oppressive servility of their tyrants.

The first engagement was fought at Derae, a village of Messenia. The soldiers, on both sides, behaved with equal bravery; the victory was doubtful; but Aristomenes, the Messenian, acquired unrivalled glory and renown. On the field of battle he

Obtain assistance from the Archives and Arcadians.

The battle of Derae. Bravery and moderation of Aristomenes.

was saluted King by the admiring gratitude of his countrymen. He declined, however, the dangerous honours of royalty, declaring himself satisfied with the appellation of General, which, in that age, implied a superiority in martial exercises, as well as in the knowledge of war, and in the experience of command. The Messenian excelled in all these, and possessed, besides, a degree of military enthusiasm, which, as it was employed to retrieve the desperate affairs of his country, deserves to be for ever remembered and admired. Sensible how much depended on the auspicious beginning of the war, he immediately marched to Sparta; entered the city, which was neither walled nor lighted, during night; and suspended in the temple of Minerva a buckler, inscribed with his name, as a monument of his success against the enemy, and an offering to procure the good will of that warlike goddess.'

The singular exploits of Panormus and Gonippus. The hardiness of this exploit was rivalled by the singular intrepidity of his companions Panormus and Gonippus. While the Lacedæmonians celebrated in their camp, the festival of their heroes Castor and Pollux, the two youths of Andania, mounted on fiery steeds, with lances in their hands, and a purple mantle flowing over their white vestments, presented themselves in the midst of the joyous assembly. The superstitious crowd, dissolved in mirth and wine, imagined that their heavenly protectors had appeared in a human form, in order to grace the festival established in their honour.* As they approached, unarmed, to pay their obeisance to the divine brothers of Helen, the young Messenians couched their speers, attacked the multitude with irresistible fury, slew them with their weapons, or trod them down with their horses, and, before the assembly recovered from its surprise and consternation, set out, in triumph, on their return to Andania.

* Pausanius, p. 266. However surprising this credulity may appear in the present age, it is attested by the most unquestionable evidence. Striking instances of it will occur in the later periods of the Greek history, in which the appearance of gods and heroes is as familiar an object as that of popish saints in the Spanish History of Mariana.

These exploits, and others of a similar kind, which are not particularly recorded, were sufficient to alarm the fears of the Spartans, and to make them seek the advice of Apollo. The oracle, when consulted by what means they might change the success of the war, ordered them to demand a general from Athens; a response highly mortifying to the high Spartan spirit, as their own kings, descended from Hercules, were the constitutional commanders of their armies. In compliance, however, with the mandate of the god, the haughtiness of Sparta was obliged to make a request which the jealousy of Athens durst not venture to refuse. The Athenians, when informed of the oracle, immediately despatched to Sparta, Tyrtæus, a man who, like every Athenian citizen, had, indeed, borne arms, but who had never been distinguished by any rank in the army. He was chiefly known to his fellow-citizens as a poet; a character in which he has been justly admired by succeeding ages.* Among the Spartans, however, he was regarded as the sacred messenger of the divinity; and his verses were supposed to convey the instructions and sentiments inspired by his heavenly protector.

The heroic valour of Aristomenes long continued to prevail against the force of the oracle, as well as against all the other enemies of Messenia. He defeated the Spartans in three successive engagements, the circumstances of which are so similar, that they have frequently been confounded with each other. They were all fought in the plain of Stenyclara, and the most remarkable at a place called the Boar's Monument, from a tradition that Hercules had anciently sacrificed there an animal of that species. The Messenians were reinforced by the assistance of

The Spartans alarmed have recourse to the oracle. Olymp. xxiv. 2. A. C. 623.

Success of the Messenians under their heroic Aristomenes.

* Insignis Homerus,

Tyrtæusque mares animos in martia bella,

Versibus exacuit.

HOR.

Three poems of Tyrtæus, containing the praise of valour, are preserved in Stobæus; a fourth, on the same subject, in the only oration now remaining of Lycurgus the Athenian orator, the friend and rival of Demosthenes. A few detached couplets may also be read in Strabo and Pausanias.

their allies of Elis and Sicyon, as well as of Argos and Arcadia. The Spartans were followed by the Corinthians, their ancient confederates, and by the citizens of Leprea, who chose to seek the protection of Sparta, rather than submit to the government of Elis. The combined army was commanded by Anaxander the Spartan king, whose influence, however, was rivalled by the authority of Hecataeus the diviner, and of Tyrtaeus the poet. The Messenians had not a poet worthy of being opposed to Tyrtaeus: but the predictions of their diviner Theocles were able, on some occasions, to promote or to restrain the ardour of Aristomenes himself.

The success of the engagement was chiefly owing to the spirited exertion of the Messenian general. At the head of a small band of chosen companions, he charged the principal division of the Spartan army, commanded by the king in person. The resistance was obstinate, and lasted for several hours. When the Spartans began to give way, Aristomenes ordered a new body of troops to complete his success, to route and pursue the enemy. He, with his little but determined band, attacked a second division of the Lacedæmonians, which still continued firm in its post. Having compelled this also to retreat, he, with amazing rapidity, turned the valour of his troops against a third, and then against a fourth brigade,* both of which giving ground, the whole army was put to flight, and pursued with great slaughter. The merit of these achievements was, on the return of Aristomenes, celebrated with great pomp at Andania. The men received their favourite hero with joyous acclamations: and the women, strowing his way with flowers, sung in his praise a stanza that has reached modern times, expressing, with elegant simplicity, the glorious victory obtained over the Lacedæmonians.

The tribute of just applause paid to the virtues of Aristomenes inspired him with a generous ambition to deserve the sin-

* Pausanias acknowledges that the exploits of Aristomenes in this engagement, almost exceed belief. Pausan. Messen. There is a remarkable coincidence in the character and achievements, as well as in the situation of Aristomenes, and those of the celebrated Scottish patriot Wallace. Vide Buchan. Hist. Scot. l. viii. passim.

cerest gratitude of his countrymen. With unremitting activity he continued, with his little band of faithful adherents, to overrun the hostile territory, to destroy the defenceless villages, and to carry the inhabitants into servitude. The towns of Pharæ, Carya, and Egila, successively experienced the fatal effects of his ravages. In the first, he found a considerable booty, in money and commodities; in the second he found a booty still more precious, the daughters of the principal inhabitants dancing in the chorus of Diana, whom he honourably protected against the licentious violence of his followers, and restored, uninjured, for the ransom offered by their parents. In an assault of Egila, Aristomenes met with an unexpected check from the enthusiasm of the Spartan matrons, who were offering sacrifice to Ceres in a neighbouring temple, long held in peculiar veneration. As soon as they perceived the approach of the enemy, the women, who, according to the institutions of Lycurgus, had been trained to all the manly exercises of the other sex, issued forth from the temple, and assailing the Messenians with knives, hatchets, burning torches, and the other instruments of sacrifice, threw them into disorder, wounded several of the soldiers, and seized the person of their commander. Next day, however, Aristomenes was delivered from captivity, through the good offices of Archidamea, priestess of Ceres, whose susceptible heart had long admired and loved the merit and renown of the brave Messenian.

The amazing success of the Messenians, which, in the course of three years, had been interrupted only by this inconsiderable incident, disposed the Spartan kings to abandon the war, and to allow their enemies to enjoy the honour and advantages which they had so bravely earned. This resolution was approved by the senate and assembly. The allies of Sparta readily adopted the same opinion. Tyrtæus alone opposed the disgraceful measure, with all the force of his authority. The sacred character of the bard, with the divine influence of his poetry, prevailed; and the Spartans again entered Messenia with an army, as numerous and powerful as any that they had before collected. But at sight of the Messenian troops, headed by

The Spartans animated by Tyrtæus.

Aristomenes, they were thrown into new consternation. The dreaded prowess of their heroic antagonist, which they had so often and so fatally experienced, continually presented itself to their minds; and the inspired arts of Tyrtæus, were again necessary to resist the increasing panic. A second time he revived their drooping courage, while attesting the glory of ancient warriors, he expatiated on the magnanimity of despising fortune, the praise and honours of valour, the joys and rewards of victory.* These sentiments, dictated by the true spirit of heroism, fired their minds with martial ardour. Disregarding the sweets of life, they longed for an honourable death. One consideration only (such was the superstition of ancient times) damped the generous warmth that animated their souls. In an engagement, which there was every reason to believe would be fought with the most obstinate valour on both sides, what crowds of warriors must fall, whose bodies, heaped together in horrid confusion, could not be recognized by their friends, or obtain, with due solemnity, the sacred rites of funeral! This melancholy thought, which chilled the boldest heart with religious horror, might have formed an insurmountable obstacle to their success, had not their terrors been removed by the prudent missionary of Apollo. By the advice of Tyrtæus, each soldier tied a token, inscribed with his name and designation, round his right arm, by means of which his body, however disfigured,† might be known to his friend and kindred. Thus fortified against the only illusion that could alarm the minds of men who preferred death to defeat, they rushed forward to attack their dreaded, and hitherto victorious, foes.

The battle
of the Tren-
chea.

The Messenian general had drawn up his forces at a place called the Great Ditch, from which this engagement has been called the battle of the Trenches.‡ The national strength was reinforced by a considerable body of Arcadian troops, commanded by their king Aristo-

* Tyrtæus, p. 2 and 3. edit. Glasg.

† Confusa corporum lineamenta. JUSTIN.

‡ Polybius, l. iv. Strabo, l. viii.

crates, to whose treachery, as much as to their own valour, the Spartans were indebted for the victory.

The Spartans, though possessed of little private wealth, had a considerable public treasure, with which they early began to bribe those whom they despaired to conquer. With this, perhaps, on many former occasions, they had tempted the avarice of Aristocrates, who, from want of opportunity rather than of inclination to betray, had hitherto maintained his fidelity inviolate. But when he perceived the unusual ardour which animated the enemy; and reflected, that if, without his concurrence, victory should declare itself on *their* side, he might for ever be deprived of an occasion to earn the wages of his intended iniquity, he determined to abandon his ancient allies, and to ensure success to the Lacedæmonians. In sight of the two armies he explained and exaggerated to his troops the advantageous position of the Spartans; the difficulty of a retreat, in case they themselves were obliged to give ground; and the inauspicious omens which threatened destruction to Messenê. In order to avoid the ruin ready to overtake their allies, he commanded his men to be prepared to follow him on the first signal for action. When the charge was sounded, and the Messenians were preparing to resist the fierce onset of the enemy, Aristocrates led off his Arcadians; and, to make his defection more apparent, crossed the whole Messenian army. The Messenians, confounded with a treachery so bold and manifest, almost forgot that they were contending against the Spartans. Many forsook their ranks, and ran after the Arcadians, now conjuring them to return to their duty, and now reproaching them with their perfidious ingratitude. Their entreaties and insults were alike vain; their army was surrounded almost on every side; the little band of Aristomenes alone, with pertinacious valour, resisting the efforts, and breaking through the embattled squadrons, of the enemy. Their example encouraged others of their countrymen to effect an escape by equal bravery; but, in attempting this dangerous measure, the greater part of the soldiers perished, as well as the generals Androcles, Phintas, and

Treachery of Aristocrates, leader of the Arcadians.

The Messenians defeated.

Phanas, persons descended from the ancient stock of Messenian nobility, and who, next to Aristomenes, formed the principal ornament and defence of their declining country.

Magnanimity of Aristomenes: Among the republics of ancient Greece, the fate of a nation often depended on the event of a battle.

The contention was not between mercenary troops, who regarded war as a trade, which they carried on merely from interest, without emulation or resentment. The citizens of free communities fought for their liberties and fortunes, their wives and children, and for every object held dear or valuable among men. In such a struggle they exerted the utmost efforts of their animosity as well as of their strength; nor did the conflict cease, till the one party had reduced the other to extremity. It was not extraordinary, therefore, that after the bloody battle of the Trenches, the Messenians should be unable to keep the field. Aristomenes, however, determined, while he preserved life, to maintain independence. With this view he collected the miserable remains of his unfortunate troops; assembled the scattered inhabitants of the open country; abandoned the cities and villages on the plain to the mercy of the victors; and seized, with his little army, the strong fortress of Eira, situate among the mountains which run along the southern shore of Messenia, defended on the north by the river Neda, and open only on the south towards the harbours of Pylus and Methonè, which offered it a plentiful supply of corn, fish, and other necessary provisions.

A. C. 682. In this situation the gallant Messenian resisted, —671.

for eleven years, the efforts of the Spartans, who endeavoured, with unremitting industry, to gain possession of the fortress. Nor was he satisfied with defending the place: on various occasions he made vigorous and successful sallies against the besiegers. With a body of three hundred Messenians, of tried valour and fidelity, he, at different times, over-ran the Spartan territories, and plundered such cities as were either weakly garrisoned or negligently defended. In order to put a stop to incursions equally dishonourable and destructive, the Spartans ordered

he throws himself into the fortress of Eira;

ravages the Spartan territories:

their frontier to be laid waste, and thus rendered incapable of affording subsistence to the enemy. But they themselves were the first to feel the inconveniency of this measure. As the lands towards that frontier were the most fertile in the province, and the crops in other parts had failed through the inclemency of the season, the Spartans were threatened with all the calamities of famine; to which the proprietors of the wasted grounds, deprived of their harvests by a rigorous injunction of the state, were prepared to add the horrors of a sedition. Tyrtæus displayed, on this occasion, the wonderful power of his art, by appeasing the angry tumult, and teaching the Spartans patiently to bear, in the service of their country, the loss of fortune, as well as of life.

While the enemy were disturbed by these com-
 motions, Aristomenes set out from Eira, with his
 favourite band, and, marching all night, arrived by
 daybreak at Amyclæ, a Lacedæmonian city situate on the
 banks of the Eurotas, at the distance of a few miles from the
 capital. Having entered the place without resistance, he carried
 off a considerable booty in slaves and merchandise, and returned
 to his mountains, before the Spartans, though apprised of his
 incursion, could arrive to the assistance of their neighbours.

A continued series of such exploits, carried on
 with equal success, inspired into the Messenians a
 degree of confidence, which had almost proved fatal
 to their cause. Neglecting that celerity, and those precau-
 tions, to which they owed their past advantages, they began to
 continue so long in the field, that the Spartans found an op-
 portunity to intercept their return. The little band of Aristo-
 menes behaved with its usual gallantry, and long defended
 itself against far superior numbers, headed by the two kings
 of Sparta. The commander, after receiving many wounds,
 was taken prisoner; and, with fifty of his bravest companions,
 carried in chains to the Lacedæmonian capital. The resent-
 ment of that republic against those who had inflicted on her
 such dreadful calamities, was not to be gratified by an ordinary

Thrown into the Ceadæ. punishment. After much deliberation, the prisoners were thrown, alive, into the Ceadæ; a profound cavern, commonly employed as a receptacle for the most atrocious criminals. All the companions of Aristomenes were killed by the fall; he alone was preserved by an accident, which, though natural enough in itself, has been disfigured by many fabulous circumstances.* The Spartans who loved valour even in an enemy, permitted him, at his earnest desire, to be buried with his shield; a weapon of defence held in peculiar veneration by the Grecian soldiers. As he descended into the deep cavity, the edge or boss of his ample buckler, striking against the sides of the pit, broke the force of the fall, and saved his life.

His wonderful preservation and escape. Two days he continued in this miserable dungeon, amidst the stench and horror of dead bodies, his face covered with his cloak, waiting the slow approaches of certain death. The third day (at daybreak) he heard a noise, and looking up, perceived a fox devouring the mangled remains of his companions. He allowed the animal to approach him, and catching hold of it with one hand, while he defended himself against its bite with the other, he determined to follow wherever it should conduct him. The fox drew towards a chink in the rock, by which he had entered the cavity, and through which he intended to get out. Aristomenes then gave liberty to his guide, whom he followed with much difficulty, scrambling through the passage which had been opened for his deliverance. He immediately took the road to Eira, and was received with pleasing astonishment among his transported companions.

He surprises the Corinthian camp.

The news of this wonderful escape were soon conveyed to Sparta by some Messenian deserters, whose information on such a subject was not more credited, than if they had brought intelligence of one risen from the dead. But, in the space of a few days, the exploits of Aristomenes convinced the incredulity of the Spartans. He was informed by his scouts, that the Corinthians

* An eagle, it is said, flew to his relief; a fable countenanced by the spread eagle on the shield. Pausanias says, he saw the shield, which was preserved in the subterraneous chapel of Trophenius at Lebædæ.

had sent a powerful reinforcement to the besiegers ; that these troops were still on their march, observing no order or discipline in the day, and encamping during night without guards or sentinels. A general less active and less enterprising, would not have neglected so favourable an occasion of annoying the enemy. But Aristomenes alone was capable of effecting this purpose by the means which were now employed. That no appearance of danger might alarm the negligence of the Corinthians, he set out unattended,* waited their approach in concealment, attacked their camp in the dead of night, marked his rout with blood, and returning loaded with spoils to Eira, offered to Messenian Jove the *Hecatombonia*, a sacrifice of an hundred victims, which *he* alone was entitled to perform, who with his own hand had killed an hundred of his enemies. This was the third time the Messenian hero had celebrated the same tremendous ritè.

Eleven years had the vigorous and persevering efforts of a single man prolonged the destiny of Eira. Aristomenes might have still withstood the impetuous ardour of the Spartans, but he could not withstand the unerring oracles of Apollo, which predicted the fall of the devoted city. The purpose of the god, however, was accomplished, not by open force, but by the secret treachery of a Lacedæmonian adulterer. This Lacedæmonian was the slave of Emperamus, a Spartan, who in the field yielded the post of honour only to the kings. The perfidious slave had escaped to the enemy with his master's property, and had formed an intrigue with a Messenian woman, whom he visited as often as her husband was called in his turn to guard the citadel. Amidst the miserable joys of their infamous commerce, the lovers were one night disturbed by the husband, who loudly claimed admittance, which however he did not obtain till his wife had concealed the adulterer. When the woman, with the most insidious flattery, inquiring

The Lacedæmonians treacherously admitted into Eira.

* The exploits of Aristomenes often oblige us to remember the expression in Pausanias, p. 244. ; *Αριστομένην δε έργα φασι αποδείξασθαι πλέον τι η ανδρα ενα εικος ην.* " That he did more than seemed possible for any one man."

by what excess of good fortune she was blessed with her husband's unexpected return, the simple Messenian related that the inclemency of the weather had driven the soldiers from their posts, the wind and thunder and rain being so violent that it was scarcely possible for them to continue any longer uncovered on the high grounds; nor could their desertion be attended with any bad consequences either to themselves or to their country, as Aristomenes was prevented by a recent wound from walking the rounds as usual, and as it could not be expected that the Spartans should venture an attack against the citadel during the obscurity and horror of a tempest. The Lacedæmonian slave overheard this recital, and thus obtained a piece of intelligence which he well knew might not only atone for his past crimes, but entitle him to gratitude from his ancient master. He cautiously escaped from his concealment, and sought with the utmost celerity the Spartan camp. Neither of the king's being then present, the command belonged to Emperamus, who readily pardoned the fortunate treachery of a servant that had afforded him the means of obtaining the highest object of his ambition. Notwithstanding the slipperiness of the steep ascent, the Spartans, by the direction of the slave, mounted the unguarded citadel, and obtained possession of all the principal posts, before the Messenians became sensible of their danger.

Obstinate
defence of
that place.

As soon as it was known that the enemy had entered into the city, Aristomenes, accompanied by the warlike prophet Theocles, together with their respective sons Gorgus and Manticles, endeavoured to animate the despair of their fellow-citizens, and to make them defend to the last extremity, the little spot of ground to which they could yet apply the endearing name of country. Such however were the terrors and confusion of the night, (the darkness, thunder, and tempest, being rendered still more dreadful by the presence of an armed enemy,) that it was impossible to form the Messenians into such an order of battle as might enable them to act with concert or effect. As the morning dawned, they saw the danger more distinctly than before, and the impossibility of any other as-

Olymp.
xvii. 2.
A. C. 671.

sistance than what may be derived from despair. They determined, at every hazard, to attack and penetrate the Spartan battalions. Even the women armed themselves with tiles, with stones, with every weapon that presented itself to their fury. They lamented that the violence of the wind prevented them from mounting to the roofs of the houses, which they had purposed to throw down on the enemy; and declared that they would rather be buried under the ruins of their country, than dragged in captivity to Sparta. Such generous resolutions ought to have retarded the fate of Messenë; but it seemed impossible to fight against superior numbers, aided by the elements, and by the manifest partiality of the gods; for the thunder happening on the right of the Spartans, afforded them an auspicious omen of future victory, and presented to the Messenians the sad prospect of impending calamities.

These circumstances, so favourable to the Spartans, were improved by the prudence of Hecatus the diviner, who advised, that the soldiers who composed the last ranks, as they could not be brought up to the attack, should be remanded to the camp; and after refreshing themselves with sleep and nourishment, recalled in due time, to the assistance of their countrymen. Thus, without depriving themselves of present strength, the Spartans provided for a future supply of fresh troops; while the Messenians, engaged in continual action with the assailants, were obliged at the same time to combat cold, sleep, fatigue, and hunger. For three days and nights they withstood the combined force of these finally resistless enemies; and when at length they began to give way, the diviner Theocles threw himself into the midst of the Spartans, crying out, "That they were not always to be victorious, nor the Messenians always to be their slaves. Such was the will of the gods; who commanded him to perish in the wreck of a country, which, in a future age, was destined to rise from its ruins."

It might have been expected that the patriotism of Aristomenes would have chosen the same honourable occasion of expiring with the freedom of his republic. But the general preferred life for the sake of defending the small remnant of a community,

Aristomenes conducts a remnant of the Messenians towards Arcadia.

which, he flattered himself would be immortal, not only from the prediction of Theocles, but from another circumstance equally important. When the downfall of Eira was foretold by the oracle of Apollo, the prudent chief had removed to a place of security some sacred pledges believed to contain the fate of Messen^é. These mysterious securities consisted of thin plates of lead, rolled up in the form of a volume, on which was engraved an account of the history and worship of the goddesses Ceres and Proserpine. Having concealed in mount Ithom^é this invaluable monument, which had been delivered down in veneration from the remotest antiquity, Aristomenes determined never to despair of the fortune, or to forsake the interests of his country. Although he perceived, therefore, that it was now become necessary to relinquish Eira, he did not, on this account, abandon the safety of its remaining citizens. In order to preserve them, the only expedient that could be employed, with any hopes of success, was the sounding a retreat, and the collecting into one body such of his soldiers as were not already too far engaged with the Spartans. Having accomplished this measure, he placed the women and children in the centre of the battalion, and committed the command of the rear to Gorgus and Manticles. He himself conducted the van, and marching towards the enemy with his spear equally poised, and with well regulated valour, showed by his mien and countenance, that he was resolved to defend to the last extremity the little remnant of the Messenian state. The Spartans, as directed by Hecatus the diviner, opened their ranks, and allowed the enemy to pass unhurt, judiciously avoiding to irritate their despair. The Messenians abandoned their city, and in mournful silence marched towards Arcadia.

Their kind
reception in
that coun-
try.

As the wars of the Grecian republics were more bloody and destructive than those of modern times, so were their alliances more generous and sincere.

When the Arcadians were informed of the taking of Eira, they travelled in great numbers towards the frontiers of their kingdom, carrying with them victuals, clothing, and all things necessary to the relief of the wretched fugitives; whom having met at mount Lycæa, they invited into their cities,

offered to divide with them their lands, and to give them their daughters in marriage.*

The generous sympathy of the Arcadians animated Aristomenes to an exploit, the boldness of which little corresponded with the depression incident to his present fortune. He had only five hundred soldiers whose activity and strength were still equal to their valour; and these he commanded, in the presence of his allies, to march straightway to Sparta. Three hundred Arcadians desired to share the glory of this spirited enterprise; and it was hoped, that as the greater part of the Lacedæmonians were employed in plundering Eira, this small but valiant body of men might make a deep impression on a city stripped of its usual defence. The arrangements for this purpose were taken with the Arcadian king Aristocrates, whose behaviour at the battle of the Trenches had occasioned the defeat of the Messenians, and whose artifice had since persuaded them, that his shameful behaviour on that day was the effect not of perfidy, but of panic terror. A second time the treacherous Arcadian betrayed the cause of his country and its allies. Having retarded the execution of Aristomenes' project, on pretence that the appearance of the entrails was unfavourable, he despatched a confidential slave to Sparta, who disclosed the imminent danger threatening that republic to Anaxander the Lacedæmonian king. The slave was intercepted on his return carrying a letter from that prince, in which he acknowledged the faithful services of his ancient benefactor. Upon the discovery of this letter, which totally disconcerted the intended enterprise against Sparta, the Arcadians, frantic with disappointment and rage, stoned to death the perfidious traitor who disgraced the name of king. The Messenians joined not in the execution of this substantial act of justice. Watching the countenance of Aristomenes, whose authority was equally powerful in the council and in the field, they observed, that instead of being agitated by resentment, it was

Aristomenes pur-
poses to sur-
prise Sparta.

Treachery
and punish-
ment of
Aristo-
crates.

Olymp.
xxvii. 2.
A. C. 671.

* Polyb. l. iv.

softened into sorrow. The hero felt the deepest melancholy, on reflecting that the only design was now rendered abortive, by which he could ever hope to avenge the wrongs of his country. Both nations testified the most signal detestation of the character of Aristocrates. The Arcadians extinguished his name and extirpated his whole race. The Messenians erected a column near the temple of Lycæan Apollo (so named from mount Lycæa, on the confines of Arcadia,) with an inscription, setting forth his crime and punishment, asserting the impossibility of concealing treacherous baseness from the investigation of time, and the penetrating mind of Jove, and praying the god to defend and bless the land of Arcadia.*

Future fortune of the Messenians.

Thus ended the second Messenian war, in the autumn of the year six hundred and seventy-one before Christ. The fugitive Messenians experienced various fortunes. The aged and infirm were treated by the Arcadians, among whom they continued to reside, with all the cordial kindness of ancient hospitality. The young and enterprising took leave of their benefactors, and under the conduct of Aristomenes repaired to Cylenè, an harbour belonging to

Olymp.

xxvii.

A. C. 670.

the Eleans. Agreeably to the information which they had received, they found in that place their countrymen of Pylus and Methonè, with whom they consulted about the means of acquiring new establishments. It was determined by the advice of their Elean friends not to undertake any expedition for this purpose until the return of spring, when they should again convene in full assembly, finally to conclude this important deliberation. Having met at the time appointed, they agreed unanimously to commit their future fortunes to the wisdom and paternal care of Aristomenes, who declared his opinion for establishing a distant colony, but declined the honour of conducting it in person, and named for this office the brave Messenian youths, Gorgus and Manticles. The former of these inheriting his father's hatred against Sparta, advised his countrymen to take possession of the island Zacynthus, which, from its situation in the Ionian sea, lay con-

* The inscription is preserved by Polybius, l. iv. and by Pausanias, Messen.

veniently for harassing the maritime parts of Laconia. Manticles proposed a different opinion, observing that the island of Sardinia, though less advantageously situated for the purposes of revenge, was far better adapted to supply the necessary comforts of life; and that the Messenians, if once settled in that large and beautiful island, would soon forget the calamities which Sparta had inflicted on them. It is uncertain whether motives of vengeance or utility would have prevailed with the Messenians; for, before any resolution was taken on this important subject, a messenger arrived from Rhegium, then governed by Anaxilas, a prince descended from the royal house of Messenia, who invited his wandering countrymen to a safe and honourable retreat in his dominions. When agreeably to this invitation, they arrived at Rhegium, Anaxilas informed them, that his subjects were continually harassed by the piratical depredations of the Zancleans, an Eolian Colony,* who possessed a delightful territory on the opposite coast. With the assistance of the Messenians it would be easy (he observed) to destroy that nest of pirates; a measure by which the city of Rhegium might be delivered from very troublesome neighbours, and the Messenians enabled to establish themselves in the most delicious situation of the whole Sicilian coast. The proposal was received with alacrity; the armament sailed for Sicily; the Zancleans were besieged by sea and land. When they perceived that part of their wall was destroyed, and that they could derive no advantage from continuing in arms, they took refuge in the temples of their gods. Even from these respected asylums, the resentment of Anaxilas was ready to tear them; but he was restrained by the humanity of the Messenians, who had learned from their own calamities to pity the miserable. The Zancleans, thus delivered from the sword and from servitude, the ordinary consequences of unsuccessful war, swore eternal gratitude to their generous protectors. The Messenians repaid this friendly sentiment with an increase of bounty; they allowed the Zancleans either to leave the place, or to remain in the honourable condition of citizens; the two nations

* Thucydid. i. vi.

gradually coalesced into one community; and Zanclé, in memory of the conquest, changed its name to Messené,* a name which may still be recognised after the revolution of twenty-five centuries.

Fortune of
Aristome-
nes. It has been already observed, that Aristomenes declined the honour of conducting the colony. His subsequent fortune is differently related by ancient writers.† Pausanias, to whom we are indebted for the fullest account of the Messenian hero, informs us, that he sailed to the isle of Rhodes, with Demagetes, the king of the city and territory of Ialysus in that island, who being advised by the oracle of Apollo to marry the daughter of the most illustrious personage in Greece, had without hesitation preferred the daughter of Aristomenes. From Rhodes he sailed to Ionia, and thence travelled to Sardis, with an intention of presenting himself to Ardys, king of the Lydians, probably to propose some enterprise to the ambition of that prince, which might finally be productive of benefit to Messené. But upon his arrival at Sardis he was seized with a distemper which put an end to his life. Other generals have defended their country with better success, but none with greater glory; other characters are more fully delineated in ancient history, but none more deserving of immortal fame; since, whatever is known of Aristomenes tends to prove, that according to the principles of his age and country, he united, in singular perfection, the merits of the citizen and of the soldier, the powers of the understanding and the virtues of the heart.

His death
and char-
acter.

* Such is the account of Pausanias, or rather of the ancient authors whom he follows. But it must not be dissembled, that Herodotus, lib. vi. c. 23. Thucydides, p. 114. and Diodorus, lib. xi. place Anaxilas, king of Rhegium, much later than the second Messenian war: It deserves to be considered, that Pausanias writing expressly on the subject, is entitled to more credit than authors who only speak of it incidentally. But when we reflect that these authors are Herodotus and Thucydides, there seems no way of solving the difficulty, but by supposing two princes of the name of Anaxilas, to the latter of whom his countrymen, by a species of flattery not uncommon in Greece, ascribed the transactions of the former.

† Confer. Pausan. Messen. & Plin. l. xi. cap. 70. Val. Maxim. lib. i. cap. 8.

CHAP. V.

State of the Peloponnesus after the conquest of Messenia.—Of the Northern Republics of Greece.—Of the Grecian Colonies.—Revolutions in Government.—Military Transactions.—The first Sacred War.—Destruction of the Crissean Republic.—Restoration of the Pythian Games.—Description of the Gymnastic and Equestrian Exercises.—History of Grecian Music.

THE conquest of Messenia rendered Sparta the most considerable power in Greece. The Peloponnesus, formerly comprehending seven, now contained only six independent states. The subjects of Sparta alone occupied two-fifths of the whole peninsula. The remainder was unequally divided among the Corinthians, Achæans, Eleans, Arcadians, and Archives. In a narrow extent of territory, these small communities exhibited a wonderful variety of character and manners. The central district of Arcadia, consisting of one continued cluster of mountains, was inhabited by a hardy race of herdsmen, proud of their ancestry, and confident in their own courage and the strength of their country. Their Eolian abstraction, their jealousy, and their pride, made them disdain connexion with the Dorians, by whose possessions they were on all sides surrounded. Careless of the arts of peace, they were engaged in unceasing hostilities with their neighbours, by whom they were despised as barbarians, and whom they condemned as upstarts; since, amidst all the revolutions of Peloponnesus, the Arcadians alone had ever maintained their original establishments.*

The industrious and wealthy Corinthians presented a very different spectacle. Inhabiting the

State of Greece after the conquest of Messenia, and first of the Peloponnesus, Olymp. xxviii. 1. A. C. 668.

Contrast between the Arcadi-

* Pausan. Arcad. Strabo, l. viii. p. 388.

ans and Co- mountainous isthmus, which towering between two
rinthians.

seas, connects the Peloponnesus with the north of Greece, the Corinthians long formed the principal centre of inland communication and foreign commerce.* Towards the southern extremity of the isthmus, and at the foot of their impregnable fortress Acro-Corinthus, they had built a fair and spacious city, extending its branches on either side, to the Saronic and Corinthian gulfs, whose opposite waves vainly assailed their narrow but lofty territory.† Their harbours and their commerce gave them colonies and a naval power. They are said to have improved the very inconvenient ships, or rather long-boats, used in early times, into the more capacious form of Trireme‡

* Pausan. Corinth. c. 4.

† Strabo, l. viii. p. 379.

‡ The Triremes, Quadriremes, Quinqueremes of the ancients were so denominated from the number of the ranks, or tiers of oars on each side the vessel; which number constituted what we may call the rate of the ancient ships of war. It was long a desideratum in the science of antiquities to determine the manner of arranging these ranks of oars, as well as to ascertain the position of the rowers. The bulk of commentators and antiquaries placed the sedilia or seats, in rows, immediately above each other, upon the sides of the vessel, which they supposed perpendicular to the surface of the water. But the least knowledge of naval architecture destroys that supposition. The rowers thus placed, must have obstructed each other; they must have occupied too large a space, and rowed with too unfavourable an angle on the ship's side; above all, the length and weight of the oars required for the upper tiers, must have rendered the working of them totally impracticable, especially as we know from ancient writers, that there was but one man to each oar. These inconveniences were pointed out by many; but the ingenuity of Lieutenant-General Melvill explained how to remedy them. He conjectured that the waste part of the ancient galleys, at the distance of a few feet above the water's edge, rose obliquely, with an angle of 45, or near it: that upon the inner sides of this waste part, the seats of the rowers, each above two feet in length, were fixed, horizontally, in rows, with no more space between each seat, and those on all sides of it, than should be found necessary for the free movements of men when rowing together. The quincunx, or chequer order, would afford this advantage in the highest degree possible; and, in consequence of the combination of two obliquities, the inconveniences above-mentioned totally disappear. In 1773 the General caused the fifth part of the waist of a Quinqueremis to be erected in the back-yard of his house in Great Pulteney-street. This model contained, with sufficient ease, in a very small space, thirty rowers, in five tiers of six men in each, lengthways, making one-fifth part of the rowers on each side of a Quinqueremis according to Polybius, who assigns three-hundred for the whole complement, besides one hundred and twenty fighting men.

galleys.* Their sea-fight against their rebellious colony, Corcyra, is the first naval engagement recorded in history.† It was fought six hundred and fifty years before Christ, at which time the Corinthians (as the ideas of wealth and luxury are relative) were already regarded by their neighbours as a wealthy and luxurious people. The influence of wealth to produce servitude prevailed over that of commerce, which is favourable to liberty. Their government, after the abolition of monarchy, was usurped by a numerous branch of the royal family, styled Bacchiadæ.‡ This Oligarchy was destroyed by Cypselus, a mild and gentle ruler,|| whose family governed Corinth till the year five hundred and eighty-five before Christ.

The contrast between Arcadia and Corinth was not more striking than that between Argolis and Achaia. The citizens of Argos, having expelled their kings, were seized with an ambition to reduce and domineer over the inferior towns in the province. The insolence of the capital provoked the indignation of the country. Mycenæ, Træzené, Epidaurus, and other places of less note, were often conquered, but never thoroughly subdued. Interest taught them to unite; and union enabled them to set at defiance the power of Argos, by which they were branded

Contrast
between the
Argives and
Achæans.

This construction, the advantages of which must appear evident to all who examine it, serves to explain many difficult passages of the Greek and Roman writers concerning naval matters. The general's discovery is confirmed by ancient monuments. On several pieces of sculpture, particularly at Rome, he found the figures of war galleys, or parts of them, with the oars represented as coming down from oar holes disposed chequerwise. In the Capo di Monte Palace at Naples, the reverse of a large Medaglione of Gordianus has the figure of a Tritemis, with three tiers, each of fourteen or fifteen oars, issuing chequerwise from an oblique side. The collection at Portici contains ancient paintings of several galleys, one or two of which, by presenting the stern part, show both the obliquity of the sides, and the rows of oars reaching to the water.—The substance of this note is already published in Governor Pownall's Antiquities. The governor, however, speaks of a gallery for the rowers, which I did not observe in the General's model: nor do I apprehend that such a gallery could be necessary, as the purpose for which it is supposed to have been intended, is completely answered by the waste part of the vessel.

* Thucydid. l. i. c. xiii.

† Ibid.

‡ Pausan. Corinth.

|| Aristot. Polit. l. v. c. xii.

as rebellious, and which they reproached as tyrannical.* The fortunate district of Achaia, having successfully resisted the oppression of Ogygus, an unworthy descendant of Agamemnon, established at a very early period, a democratical form of policy.† Twelve cities, each of which retained its municipal jurisdiction, united on a foot of perfect equality and freedom. This equitable confederacy prepared the way for the Achæan laws, so celebrated in latter times, when the cause of Greece, shamefully abandoned by more powerful guardians, was defended by the feeble communities of Achaia.‡

Between the Lace-
dæmonians
and Elians.

We have already had occasion to explain the important institutions of Iphitus and Lycurgus. The very opposite systems adopted by these great legislators, respectively suited the weakness of Elis and the strength of Sparta; and occasioned a remarkable contrast between the peaceful tranquillity of the former republic,|| and the warlike ambition of the latter, the lines of whose national character grew more bold and decisive after the Messenian conquest. The piteous remnant of the Messenians, who had defended their freedom with the most persevering bravery, was reduced to a cruel and ignominious vassallage. Confounded with the miserable mass of Helots, those wretched victims of Spartan cruelty, they were condemned to laborious drudgery, exposed to daily insult, and compelled (still more intolerable!) to tend their own flocks, and cultivate their own fields, for the benefit of relentless tyrants.§ The haughty temper of the Spartans became continually more presumptuous. They totally disdained such arts and employments as they usually saw practised by the industry of slaves. War, and hunting as the image of war, were the only occupations which it suited their dignity to pursue; and this constant exercise in arms, directed by the military code of Lycurgus, rendered them superior in the field of battle, not only to the neighbouring states of

* Pausan. l. vi. c. xxi. Diodor. Sicul. l. xi. p. 275.

† Pausan. Achaic. Strabo, l. viii. p. 383, & seq.

‡ Polyb. l. ii.

|| Pausan. Eliac. & Strabo, l. viii.

§ Pausanias Messeniac.

Peloponnesus, but to the bravest and most renowned republics beyond the Corinthian isthmus.

While the Grecian peninsula was agitated by the stubborn conflict between the Spartans and Messenians, the northern states had been disturbed by petty wars, and torn by domestic discord.* The Greek settlements in Thrace, in Africa, and Magna Græcia, were yet too feeble to attract the regard of history. But, during the period now under review, the Asiatic colonies, as shall be explained in a subsequent chapter, far surpassed their European brethren in splendour and prosperity.

Having abolished the regal office, the Athenians, whose political revolutions were followed with remarkable uniformity by neighbouring states, submitted the chief administration of their affairs to a magistrate intitled Archon, or ruler. The authority of the Archon long continued hereditary: it became afterwards decennial: at length nine annual archons were appointed by the powerful class of nobility, consisting not only of the descendants of such foreign princes as had taken refuge in Athens, but of those Athenian families which time and accident had raised to opulence and distinction. The great body of the people gained nothing by these revolutions. The equestrian order, so called from their fighting on horseback, which, before the improvement of tactics, rendered them superior to every rencounter with the disorderly rabble, enjoyed all authority religious, civil, and military.† The Athenian populace were reduced to a condition of miserable servitude; nor did they recover their ancient and hereditary freedom until the admired institutions of Theseus were restored and improved by Solon, towards the beginning of the sixth century before Christ.

The domestic dissensions which prevailed in every state beyond the Isthmus, were only interrupted by foreign hostilities. Interference of interest occasioned innumerable contests between the Phocians

State of the northern republics of Greece. Of the Grecian colonies.

Political revolutions in Athens. A. C. 754. A. C. 684.

A. C. 594.

Unimportance of the military transactions preceding

* Thucyd. l. i.

† Aristot. Politic. l. iv. c. xiii.

the first Sacred War.
Olymp.
xlv.
A. C. 600.

and Thebans, the Dorians and Thessalians, the Locrians and Ætolians.* Their various inroads, battles and sieges, which were begun with passion, carried on without prudence, and concluded without producing any permanent effect, have been consigned by ancient historians to a just oblivion. But the first Sacred War is recommended to our attention, both on account of the cause from which it arose, and the consequences with which it was attended. This memorable enterprise was occasioned by an injury committed against the oracle of Delphi; it was undertaken by order of the Amphictyons; it ended in the total destruction of the cities accused of sacrilegious outrage; and its successful conclusion was celebrated by the Pythian games and festivals; which, of all Grecian institutions, had the most direct as well as most powerful tendency to refine rudeness and soften barbarity.

Description
of the re-
public of
Crissa.

The territory of the Crisseans, extending southward from that of Delphi, comprehended, in an extent of about twenty-four miles in length and fifteen in breadth, three large and flourishing cities; Crissa the capital, which gave name to the province; Cirrha, advantageously situated for commerce on the western side of a creek of the Corinthian Gulf; and Anticirrha, on the eastern side of the same creek, celebrated for the production of hellebore, as well as for the skill with which the natives prepared that medicinal plant, the virtues of which were so much extolled and exaggerated by credulous antiquity.†

Its prosper-
ity and
insolence.

The Crisseans possessed all the means of happiness, but knew not how to enjoy them. Their territory, though small, was fertile; and as its value was enhanced by the comparative sterility of the greatest part of Phocis,‡ it acquired and deserved the epithet of *Happy*. Their harbour being frequented by vessels, not only from Greece, but from Italy and Sicily, they carried on an extensive foreign commerce, considering the limited communication between distant countries in that early age; and the neigh-

* Isocrat. Panathen.

† Strabo and Pliny.

‡ Strabo, p. 323, & seq.

bourhood of Delphi, at which it was impossible to arrive without passing through their dominions, brought them considerable accessions of wealth,* as well as of dignity and respect. But these advantages instead of satisfying, increased the natural avidity of the Crisseans. They began to exact vexatious and exorbitant duties from the merchants who came to expose their wares in the sacred city, which, on account of the great concourse of profligate pilgrims from every quarter, soon became the seat, not of devotion only, but of dissipation, vanity, and licentious pleasure. It was in vain for the merchants to exclaim against these unexampled impositions: the taxes were continually increased; the evil admitted not the expectation of either remedy or relief; and the strangers, familiarized to it by custom, began to submit without murmur; perhaps enduring the hardship with the greater patience, when they perceived that they drew back the tax in the increased price of their commodities. Encouraged by this acquiescence in their tyranny, the Crisseans levied a severe impost on the pilgrims, whether Greeks or Barbarians, who visited the temple of Apollo; a measure directly inconsistent with a decree of the Amphictyons, which declared that all men should have free access to the oracle,† as well as extremely hurtful to the interest of the Delphians, who soon felt a gradual diminution of their profits from the holy shrine. It was natural for those who sustained a loss either of gain or of authority, to remonstrate against the extortions of the Crisseans; but their remonstrances, instead of producing any happy alteration of behaviour, only exasperated men grown insolent through prosperity. In the time of profound peace, the Crisseans, provoked by useful admonitions, which they proudly called threats, entered with an armed force the territories of their neighbours; destroyed every thing that opposed them with fire and sword; laid the defenceless cities under heavy contributions, and carried many of the inhabitants into servitude.‡ Delphi itself, however much it was revered in Greece,

Exacts contributions from the merchants and strangers who resorted to the oracle of Delphi.

* Pausan. in Phocic.

† Strabo, l. ix. p. 418.

‡ Æschin. in Ctesiphont.

and respected even by the most distant nations, appeared to the sacrilegious invaders an object better fitted to gratify lust of plunder, than to excite emotions of piety. Neighbourhood had rendered them familiar with the woods, temples, and grottos of the presiding divinity; with the manners and character of many of his ministers they were probably too well acquainted to hold them in much reverence; and having deserved their resentment by what they had already done, they resolved to render it impotent by what they should next accomplish.

The Criseans plunder the shrine of Delphi.

The design of plundering Delphi was no sooner formed than executed. The imaginations of men were not prepared for such an event; nor had any measures been taken to prevent such an unexpected and abominable profanation. The enemy meeting with no resistance, became masters of the temple, and seized the rich votive offerings accumulated by the pious generosity of ages. Thence they passed into the sacred wood, and rendered furious through pride or guilt, attacked, plundered, and murdered the promiscuous crowd, who were employed in the usual exercise of their devotions. The young were insulted with a licentiousness of rage, violating decency and nature. Even a deputation of the Amphictyons, clothed in the venerable garb, and bearing the respected ensigns of their office, were repelled with blows and contumely, while they vainly attempted to stop the fatal progress of these frantic and impious outrages, committed against every thing held sacred among men.*

Measures of the Amphictyonic council.

The Amphictyonic council, to whom it belonged to judge and to punish the atrocious enormities of the Criseans, experienced in an uncommon degree, those inconveniences to which all numerous assemblies are in some measure liable. Their proceedings were retarded by formality, warped by prejudice, and disturbed by dissension. Notwithstanding the aggravated crimes of the Criseans, it was not without encountering many difficulties and much opposition, that Solon, one of the Athenian repre-

* Pausan. in Phocic.

sentatives, roused his associates to the resolution of avenging the offended majesty of religion, the violated laws of nature, and their own personal injuries. When at length they concurred in this useful and pious design, the measures pursued on the present occasion, as well as in all the future wars undertaken by their authority, were equally slow and indecisive. The forces which they at first brought into the field, were by no means equal to the enterprise for which they were designed. After various reinforcements, they attempted ineffectually, during nine summers and winters, to reduce the towns of Crissa and Cirrha, which finally submitted, in the tenth year of the war, rather to the art than to the power of the besiegers.

The events of the preceding year strongly paint the ignorance, the superstition, and the rude manners of the times. The Crisseans had no sooner plundered, than they abandoned the temple of Apollo. Thither, by the advice of Solon, the Amphictyons sent messengers to consult the oracle concerning the proper means, as well as the just measure, of their vengeance. They were commanded instantly to levy war on the Crisseans; to persecute them to the last extremity; to demolish their towns, to desolate their country, and after consecrating it to Apollo, Diana, Latona, and Minerva, to prevent it from ever thenceforth being cultivated for the service of man.* In obedience to this peremptory injunction of the god, the Amphictyons returned to their several republics, in order to collect troops, and to animate the exertions of their countrymen in the common cause. The Greeks, however, were too deeply engaged in domestic dissensions, to make effectual efforts for the glory of Apollo. Few adventurers repaired to the holy standard; and the war, neither supported by vigour of execution, nor directed by wisdom of deliberation, languished for several years under different generals. At length Eurylochus, a Thesalian prince of great valour and activity, was intrusted with the command of the Amphictyonic army.† The new general waited till the time of harvest, to ravage the open country, to

The principal events in the Sacred War.

* Æschin. *ibid.* † Plut. in Solon. Strabo, l. ix. Polyænus, l. vi. c. xv.

destroy the villages by fire and sword, and to desolate the *happy* Crissean plain.

Siege of Crissa. On several occasions he defeated the army of the Crisseans, who made frequent and vigorous sallies in order to defend their possessions. But when he attempted to make an impression on the fortified strength of Crissa, its thick walls, its lofty towers, and above all, the activity and courage of its citizens, presented obstacles which it was impossible to surmount. The art of besieging towns still continued in a state of great imperfection. The battering-rams, and other engines employed in this operation of war, were of too rude a construction to make such a breach in the walls as might not easily be repaired. It was in vain that Eurylochus attempted by blockade to reduce the place. The enemy were furnished with all necessaries in great abundance, from the well-frequented port of Cirrha. Years thus passed away, and nothing decisive was effected. The besiegers, fatigued with labour, and uneasy at disappointment, had often abandoned their camp, and cantoned themselves on the borders of the Crissean territory, where they expected more salutary supplies of provisions.

Pestilence in the army of the besiegers, remedied by Nebros of Cos.

When they again returned to their duty, they were afflicted in the ninth year of the war, with a pestilential, or at least an epidemic disorder, occasioned by the want of wholesome food, the great numbers of men cooped up during the warm season within a narrow space, or by some unknown malignity of the atmosphere. A great part of the army fell a prey to the increasing contagion. Anxious for the public safety, the Amphictyons had recourse to the wisdom of Apollo, who, instead of recommending to them the aid of an able physician exhorted them to bring from the isle of Cos the *fawn with gold*. Ambassadors were immediately despatched to that island, in order to unravel the meaning of the gold thus wrapped up in its customary veil of mystic obscurity. They had no sooner explained their commission in the Caon assembly, than an eminent citizen, named Nebros, rising up, declared the sense of the oracle. "I am the fawn," said he, "pointed

out by Apollo," (for Nebros in Greek signifies a fawn,) "and my son Chrysos" (which is the Greek word for gold) "has carried off the prize of strength, courage, and beauty, from all his competitors." The person who thus spoke was justly celebrated, on account of his ancestor Esculapius, of his descendant Hippocrates,* and of his own unrivalled proficiency in the healing art. The knowledge of physic was become the hereditary honour, and almost the appropriate possession, of his family, by which it had been cultivated for many ages, and to which it is supposed even at present to owe its principal improvement and perfection. Nebros obeyed with alacrity the injunction of Apollo, the peculiar patron of the science in which he excelled. At his own expense he equipped a vessel of fifty oars, loaded with valuable medicines, as well as with warlike stores, and accompanied by his son Chrysos, set sail with the Amphictyonic ambassadors, in order to cure the confederates, and to conquer the Crisseans.

His advice, his prudence, and his assiduity, re- Sack of
Crissa.
stored the decaying health of the army. Their numbers, however, were already so much diminished, that it seemed impossible by open force to put a successful end to the war. On this occasion the artful Coan employed a stratagem, that would have appeared entirely inconsistent with the laws of arms which had long been established in Greece, if it had not seemed to be the dictate of a divine admonition. The horse of Eurylochus was observed for several days to roll on the sand, and to strike his foot with great violence against a particular spot of ground. In digging under this ground, a wooden pipe was discovered, which supplied Crissa with water. The extraordinary means by which this discovery was made, convinced the ignorant credulity of the Greeks, that some important advantage might be derived from it; and upon mature deliberation it was concluded, that Apollo had thus suggested a

* We owe, almost entirely, the history recorded in the text, to an oration of Thessalus, son of Hippocrates, addressed to the Athenians. It is published among the letters of his father. Vid. Hippocrat. Opera, ex. edit. Fæsi, v. ii. p. 1291. There are some learned dissertations on the subject on the 5th and 7th volumes of the Memoirs of the Academy of Belles Lettres.

contrivance for destroying his own and their enemies. Complying therefore with the heavenly intimation, Nebros poisoned the conduit of water; and the effect of this detestable artifice was soon discernible in the languid efforts and diminished resistance of the beseiged. The beseigers, on the other hand, encouraged by the evident partiality of the gods, carried on their operation with redoubled vigour. Rewards were proposed for the man who should first mount the walls, an honour obtained by the youthful ardour of Chrysos. The city was thus taken by assault; the fortifications were demolished, the houses burnt, and the inhabitants treated with a severity proportioned to the atrocious enormity of their own crimes, and the exasperated resentment of the victors.

Consecra-
tion of the
Cirrhean
plain, The command of Apollo, however, was not completely executed by the destruction of the Crissean capital. Part of that impious community still subsisted in the maritime town of Cirrha, the reduction of which must have presented great difficulties to the Amphictyons, since it was necessary for them a third time to have recourse to the oracle. The answer delivered on this occasion was involved in twofold obscurity. The words of the god, at all times dark and doubtful, now seemed absolutely unintelligible, since he made the taking of Cirrha, an event which there was every reason to expect, depend on a circumstance that appeared at first sight impossible. "You shall not overturn," said he, "the lofty towers, of Cirrha, until the foaming billows of blue-eyed Amphitrité beat against the resounding shores of the Holy Land." How could the sea be conveyed for several leagues over rocks and mountains, so that its waves might dash against the craggy precipices of Parnassus, which surround the sacred groves of Delphi? This was an enigma which the oldest and most experienced members of the Amphictyonic council acknowledged themselves unable to explain. The condition on which success was promised them, seemed incapable of being fulfilled; the inhabitants of Cirrha flattered themselves with hopes of unalterable security; and the wisest of the Amphictyons gave their opinion, that there was good reason to abandon an enterprise which seemed disagreeable to

Apollo, by whose advice the war had been originally undertaken.

While these sentiments universally prevailed in both armies, Solon, the Athenian, alone ventured to propose an advice more advantageous for the confederates, as well as more honourable for the holy shrine. His superior wisdom taught him the impiety of supposing that the god should require an impossibility as the condition of happily terminating a war, the first measures of which he had himself suggested or approved. It exceeded indeed, human power to remove the sea to the boundary of the Holy Land; but by extending this boundary it was possible to make the Holy Land communicate with the sea. This might easily be accomplished, since it sufficed for that purpose to consecrate the intermediate space with the same ceremonies which had formerly been employed in dedicating the Delphian territory.*

The opinion of Solon, proposed with much solemn gravity, was honoured with the unanimous approbation of his associates. Every one now wondered that he himself should not have hit on an expedient which seemed so natural and so obvious. Preparations were immediately made for carrying it into execution, and the property of the Cirrhean plain was surrendered to the god with the most pompous formality; the Amphictyons, either not considering that they bestowed on Apollo what, as it was not their own, they had not a right to alienate; or, if this idea occurred, easily persuading themselves that the piety of the application would atone for the defect of the title.

When the senators had performed the consecration, the soldiers assailed the walls of Cirrha with the increasing activity of re-animated hope. That place, as well as the dependent town of Anticirrha, situate on the opposite side of the creek, soon submitted to their arms. The impious and devoted citizens were either put to the sword, or dragged into captivity. The Crisean community, formerly so rich and flourishing, was for

advised by
Solon,

and put in
execution.

Cirrha
taken, and
consequences of the
war.

* Plutarch. in Solon. Pausan in Phoc.

ever extirpated.* Their lands were laid waste, their cities demolished, the proud monuments of their victories leveled with the ground ; and the port of Cirrha, which was allowed to remain as a convenient harbour for Delphi, subsisted as the only vestige of their ancient grandeur. The territory, as it had been condemned by the divine will to perpetual sterility, long continued uncultivated ; for the Delphians were not obliged to labour the ground in order to acquire the necessaries, the accommodations, and even the highest luxuries of life. The superstition of the age furnished an abundant resource to supply their wants ; the granaries of Apollo filled spontaneously ; and, to use the figurative style of an ancient author, the land, unploughed and unsown by the industry of man, flourished in the richest luxuriance under the culture of the god.†

The happy
issue of the
sacred war
celebrated
by the Py-
thian
games.
Olymp.
xlvii. 2.
A. C. 590.

The successful event of a war begun, carried on, and concluded under the respectable sanction of the Amphictyonic council, was celebrated with all the pomp and festivity congenial to the Grecian character. According to an ancient and sacred institution, the several republics were accustomed by public shows, to commemorate their respective victories. When different communities had employed their joint efforts in the same glorious enterprise, the grateful triumph was exhibited with a proportional increase of magnificence ; but the fortunate exploits of gods and heroes, which had extensively benefited the whole Grecian name, were distinguished by such peculiar and transcendent honours as eclipsed the splendour of all other solemnities. While each republic paid the tribute of provincial festivals to the memory of its particular benefactors, the whole nation were concerned in acknowledging the bountiful goodness of Jupiter, the protecting aid of Neptune, the unerring wisdom of Apollo, and the unrivaled labours of Hercules. Hence the Olympian, Isthmian, Pythian, and Nemean games, which, though alike founded on the same principle of pious gratitude, were, from

* Æschin. in Ctesiphont.

† *Ελευθερο τα παντα ντο γεωργον τωθειω.* LUCIAN. Phalar. ii.

their first establishment, distinguished by different ceremonies, and respectively consecrated to separate divinities.

The Amphictyons were principally indebted to the prudent admonitions of Apollo for the fortunate issue of a war undertaken by his authority ; it therefore became them, while they rejoiced in the happy success of their arms, to offer respectful thanks to the god. These objects might easily be conjoined in the pliant texture of ancient superstition, since the celebration of the Pythian games, which had been interrupted by a long train of wars and calamities, would form an entertainment not less agreeable to the supposed dictates of piety than adapted to the natural demands of pleasure.

The festival re-established on this memorable occasion in honour of Apollo, is mentioned by ancient historians, on account of two remarkable circumstances by which it was distinguished. Instead of the scanty rewards usually distributed among the gymnastic combatants at other public solemnities, the Amphictyons bestowed on the victors the most precious spoils of the cities Crissa and Cirrha. The exhibitions of poetry and music had hitherto been united in all the Grecian festivals, and the laurel crown had been adjudged to the poet-musician, who enlivened the compositions of his genius by the sound of his lyre. The Amphictyons for the first time separated the kindred arts ; proposed prizes of instrumental music unaccompanied with poetry, and thus afforded an opportunity to candidates for fame to display superior merit in their respective departments of the same profession.

This festival distinguished from the preceding by two circumstances.

These are the only particulars concerning the re-establishment of the Pythian games which seemed worthy the observation of Grecian authors, whose works were addressed to men who knew by experience and observation the nature and tendency of their domestic institutions. But a more copious explanation is required to satisfy the curiosity of the modern reader. The sacred games of Greece cannot be illustrated by a comparison with any thing similar in the present age ; they were intimately connected with the whole system of ancient polity, whether civil or re-

History of the sacred games.

ligious; they were attended with very extraordinary effects, both of a natural and moral kind: and on all these accounts they merit particular attention in a work which professes to combine with the history of arts that of arms, and to contemplate the varying picture of human manners, as well as the transient revolutions of war and empire.

In their most perfect form, the sacred games consisted in the exhibitions of the Stadium and Hippodrome, accompanied by the more refined entertainments of music and poetry. The Olympic Stadium took its name from the measure of length most commonly employed by the Greeks, consisting of the eighth part of a Grecian mile, or six hundred and thirty English feet. The Stadium, still remaining at Athens, has been accurately measured by our travellers, and is an hundred and twenty-five geometrical paces in length, and twenty-seven in breadth: it forms a long and lofty terrace on the banks of the Ilyssus, and its sides were anciently built of white marble. That of Olympia was probably of the same dimensions, but far less magnificent, being entirely composed of earth. The one extremity contained an elevated throne, appropriated for the judges of the games, and a marble altar, on which the priestess of Ceres and other privileged virgins, sat to behold a solemnity from which the rest of their sex were rigorously excluded. At the other extremity was the tomb of Endymion, the favourite of chaste Diana. The Stadium was divided by pillars into two courses. The five gymnastic exercises, so much celebrated by all the writers of antiquity, and so accurately described by Homer, Pindar, Sophocles and Pausanias, began with the foot race, which is supposed to have been the most ancient, and which always retained the prerogative of distinguishing the Olympiads by the name of the victorious racer. The exercise at first consisted in running naked from one end of the Stadium to the other. The course was afterwards doubled, and at length the competitors were required to pass the goal three, six, and even twelve times, before they could be entitled to the prize. Motives of utility introduced the race of men loaded with heavy armour, which rendered this

exercise a contest of strength as well as of swiftness. 2. The second trial of agility consisted in leaping, the competitors endeavouring to surpass each other in the length, without regard to the height of their leap. They carried in their hands weights of lead through the perforations of which their fingers passed as through the handle of a shield, and by these they poised, and impelled forwards, their bodies. The perfection attained in this exercise must have far exceeded the experience of modern times, if we can believe that Phaulus of Crotona* leaped fifty-two feet. 3. The wrestling of the ancients required equal strength and agility. It was chiefly remarkable on account of the oil and sand with which they rubbed their bodies, in order to supply their joints, to prevent excessive perspiration, and to elude the grasp of their antagonists. The wrestlers were matched by lot, and the prize was adjudged to him who had thrice thrown his adversary on the ground. 4. The two following exercises tried chiefly the strength of the arms. The first consisted in throwing a huge mass of polished iron, brass, or stone, of a circular form resembling a shield, but without handle or thong. It was called the disk, and thrown under the hand as the quoit is in England. The object of the competitors was to surpass each other in the length of the cast. Akin to this was the art of darting the javelin, which, as that weapon was directed at a mark, required steadiness of eye as well as dexterity of hand. 5. The last of the gymnastic exercises, both in order and in esteem, was that of boxing. It was sometimes performed by the naked fist, and sometimes with the formidable *cæstus*, composed of raw hides lined with metal. Before the victory could be decided, it was necessary, from the nature of that exercise, that one of the combatants should acknowledge his defeat; a condition which seemed so inconsistent with the obstinacy of Grecian valour, that few ventured to contend in this dangerous amusement. The laws of Sparta absolutely prohibited her citizens from ever engaging in it, because a Spartan was taught to disdain saving his life by yielding to an opponent. Another reason, no less remarkable, tended still more to degrade the ex-

* Pausanias, p. 624.

ercise of boxing. Besides strength and agility, the success of the boxer, it was thought, depended on a certain ponderous fleshiness of arm, which unfitted him to engage in any other contest. The regimen required for keeping up his corpulency, so necessary for the defence of his bones against the weight of blows, was altogether incompatible with the life of a soldier; a life of hardship and inequality, and continually exposed to the want of rest, of provisions, and of sleep.

These were the five gymnastic exercises in which the Grecian youth were trained with so much care, and to which they applied with so much emulation. But besides these simple sports, there were two others formed of their various combination; the Pancratiun, which consisted of wrestling and boxing; and the Pentathlon, in which all the five were united; and to excel in such complicated exercises required an education and way of living not necessary to be observed by those who contended in the simple feats of strength, and agility, and which was scarcely compatible with the study of any other than the athletic profession.

The Hippodrome and Equestrian exercises.

The Hippodrome, or ground allotted for the horse races, was twice as long as the Stadium,* and sufficiently spacious to allow forty chariots to drive abreast.† The chariot race was instituted at Olympia about an hundred years after the regular celebration of the games, and that of riding horses twenty years later. These warlike sports followed the same progress with the military art, of which they were the image, and in which the use of chariots long preceded that of cavalry. The cars of the Greeks, as evidently appears from their medals, were low, open behind, furnished with only two wheels, and unprovided with any seat for the drivers, who stood with much difficulty in the body of their vehicles, while they commanded four horses, which were not paired, but formed on one line. Notwithstanding this inconvenient posture, they performed six and sometimes twelve rounds of the Hippodrome amounting to six Grecian miles, of eight hundred paces each, of which an

* Hesychius.

† Pausan. l. vi. p. 382, & 390.

English mile contains one thousand five hundred and fifty. The Grecian heroes excelled, during the heroic ages, in this dangerous exercise; but in later times the owners of the horses were allowed to employ a charioteer, which enlarged the sphere of candidates for the Olympic prize, by admitting many foreign princes, as well as the wealthy ladies of Macedon and Laconia, who could not appear in person at this important solemnity. Though riding horses were not so early employed as chariots, either at the games, or in war, yet we cannot believe, with a fanciful writer,* that this circumstance should have been occasioned by the timidity of the Greeks to mount on horseback; for we learn from Homer, that, even in the most ancient times, they were acquainted with all the feats of dexterity practised by our most accomplished jockeys.† But before the Persian war, the poverty of the Greeks prevented them from importing foreign horses, and their domestic breed was naturally of an inferior kind to those of Asia and Africa. The Spartans first employed them in battle during their wars with the Messenians. In the Persian expedition, Xerxes tried the mettle of the Persian, against the Thessalian horses, and the former carried off the palm in every contest. For a considerable time after the shameful retreat of that haughty monarch, the Athenians, who then formed the most powerful community of Greece, had a squadron of only three hundred horsemen: and it was not till that ambitious republic had begun to extend her dominion over the inferior states, that she seriously applied to the improvement of her cavalry.

While the Greeks thus acquired the accomplishments of the body, and displayed at Olympia their skill in horsemanship, and their vigour in the gymnastic exercises, the more refined entertainments of the fancy were not neglected; and the agreeable productions of music and poetry added lustre and eloquence to every Grecian solemnity. It is well observed by the only ancient writer to whom we are indebted for an historical account of Grecian music, that the arts of peace, as they are more agreeable and

The musical entertainments.

* The Chevalier Folard.

† Iliad xv. ver. 679.

more useful than those of war, demand in a superior degree, the regard of the historian. If this had been the general opinion of authors, the study of their works would be equally entertaining and instructive. The writer of history would explain the various discoveries which happily tend to improve and to embellish social life; by introducing scenes of gaiety and pleasure, he would diversify the eternal theme of human misery; and while he expatiated on the crimes and calamities of men, he would not neglect to point out the means best adapted to prevent the perpetration of the one, and to sooth the suffering of the other. But the Greek historians have not attempted to afford us this important information; they enlarge copiously on such topics as are adapted to the use of their countrymen; and they preserve the most mortifying silence concerning those subjects which deservedly excite the curiosity of later ages. Of all the arts cultivated by the ingenuity of their contemporaries, music was the most connected with religion, government, and manners; and the effects ascribed to Grecian music are numbered among the most singular as well as the most authentic of all recorded events;* yet as to the nature, the origin, the progress, the perfection, in one word, the history of this art, we can know little more than what we learn from the musical treatise of Plutarch, a work extremely short and imperfect, obscure throughout, and in many parts unintelligible.†

Why introduced at the public games.

Without much historical information, however, we may venture to explain the introduction of musical entertainments at the four public solemnities.

These grand spectacles were destined to exhibit an

* The continual complaints of Plato and Aristotle prove that the music of their age had greatly degenerated from its ancient dignity. It afterwards continued, like all the other arts, gradually to decline; yet, in the second century before Christ, the grave, judicious, and well-informed Polybius ascribes the most extraordinary effects of the Grecian music. Polybius, l. iv. c. xx. & seq.

† M. Burette, a French physician, has translated this treatise, in the tenth volume of the *Memoirs of the Academy*, &c. He finds fewer difficulties in it, than present themselves to men far better acquainted with the theory and practice of this elegant art. See *Burney on Music*, vol. i. p. 36.

embellished representation of the ordinary transactions of real life, and while the gymnastic and equestrian exercises represented the image of war, the most serious occupation of the Greeks, music recalled the memory of religion and love, their most agreeable amusements. Besides this, as music in those early times was closely connected with poetry,* and as the use of composition in prose was not known in Greece till the time of Pherecydes of Syros, and Cadmus of Miletus, who flourished only five hundred and forty-four years before Christ,† the name of music naturally comprehended all the learning of the age; and to obtain the prize in the musical contests, was equivalent to the glory of being declared superior to the rest of mankind, in mental abilities and endowments.

Extent of
Grecian
music.

These abilities and endowments were anciently regarded in proportion to their utility. Before the practice of writing was introduced, the history of past events could be preserved only by tradition; and tradition was rendered more sure and permanent by being committed to the safe protection of harmonious numbers.‡ The customary offices of religion were celebrated in poetical composition, and the various hymns appropriated to the worship of particular divinities, were retained by the faithful memory of their respective votaries. The tuneful tribe, who were thus employed to extol the bounty of the gods, to exalt the glory of heroes, and to record and perpetuate the accumulated wisdom of antiquity, condescended also to regulate the duties, and to improve the pleasures of private life. The same bards who taught the men to be brave, exhorted the women to be chaste. || Poetry, together with the sister arts of music and dancing, are elegantly called by Homer the chief ornaments of the feast.

* The same word signified a song and a poem, a musician and a poet; *αδαι, ασματα; ωδοι, ωδικοι, αοιδοι.* Hesych.

† Strabo, l. i.

‡ Ως δε ειπω ο πεζος λογος κατασκευασμενος μνημα του ποιητικου εστι πρωτις α γαρ η ποιητικη κατασκευη παρηλθεν εις το μυσον.

STRABO, l. i.

|| Of this we have an example in Homer's Demodocus.

The poet-musician quelled seditions in states,* and maintained the domestic quiet of families; while he published laws of the most extensive influence over the whole community, he disdained not to animate the humble but necessary labours of the mechanic; every profession in society, even the meanest and most vulgar, was encouraged and adorned by its particular song;† and the most ordinary transactions of common life, however trivial and low and uninteresting in themselves, were heightened and ennobled by the combined charms of music and poetry.

The degree of perfection in which these arts are found in any country, depends on the language and character of the people by whom they are cultivated. Of this there is abundant proof in the history of ancient, as well as in that of modern nations. The melancholy, stern,‡ atrocious, and unrelenting temper of the Egyptians (the supposed instructors of Greece,) disqualified that nation either for improving or for relishing the beauties of harmony. The harsh dissonance of the eastern languages, their deficiency in vowels, and the inflexible thickness of their sounds, rendered them but little susceptible of musical composition. The music of the Egyptians and Orientals therefore depended rather on the quantity than the quality of sound; and the principal object of their art was rather to rouse the attention by noise, than to charm the soul by melody.

Its origin. The language and manners of the Greeks were of

* See what is said above of Tyrtæus, p. 141.

† See Athenæus *passim*, and the discourses on the Greek songs, in the 3d volume of the excellent selection of the Memoirs of the Academy.

‡ The nature of the government furnishes another reason for the imperfection of Egyptian music. Homer characterizes Egypt by the epithet *πικρος* bitter, to denote the rigid severity of the laws. Among that grave and formal people, the hours of amusement, as well as of business, were prescribed by law. There was a particular time of the day, not only for attending the courts of justice, but for walking, bathing, and even for performing the duties of matrimony: Diodor. Siculus. Poetry, music, sculpture, and all other arts, were regulated by express statute; and, if we may believe Plato, continued invariable for many thousand years. Plato, *de Legibus*. The austerity and restraints of despotism are inconsistent with that flowing freedom of genius necessary to the perfection of poetry.

a different and a far superior kind to those of the neighbouring nations. Hence may be deduced the origin and peculiar excellence of their music, which, though injudiciously* ascribed to the invention of Thracians, Mysians, and other barbarous strangers, must have been the natural production of Grecian genius, since the three most ancient modes of music were the Dorian, Ionian, and Eolian, corresponding with the three great divisions of the Hellenic race, and the three principal distinctions of the Hellenic tongue.†

The perfection of language as well as of music, depends on the melody of its sounds ; their measure or rhythm ; their variety ; and their suitableness to the subject which they are meant to describe or to express. The circumstances of the Greeks in the earliest periods of their society‡ rendered them peculiarly attentive to all these objects. They lived continually in crowds ; all matters of consequence were decided by the voice of the assembly ; and, next to the force of his arm, every warrior felt himself indebted to the persuasive accents of his tongue. The perpetual necessity of employing the power of eloquence during the infancy of their political state, made them retain the original tones and cadences by which men, as yet unpractised in the use of arbitrary signs, had made known their affections and their wants. These tones and cadences, imitating the language of action (the first and most natural language of savages,) possessed a degree of energy and of warmth which can never be attained by the mere artifice of articulate sounds.|| By uniting them to these sounds, the Greeks gave all the force of a natural, to an arbitrary sign. Music and

Causes of the perfection of the Grecian language and music.

* While detraction referred the discovery of music to strangers, vanity referred it to the gods ; and both accounts serve to prove the great antiquity of the art. Plut. de Music.

† We owe the knowledge of this important circumstance to Heraclides of Pontus, the contemporary and scholar of Plato. His words are cited by Athenæus, l. xiv.

‡ See above, chap. ii.

|| See an excellent discourse of the Abbé Arnaut, on the Greek accents, in the 3d volume of the Choix de Memoirs.

action were incorporated in the substance of their speech ; and the descriptive power of words was extended to all those objects which can be characterized by sound and motion, or which the various modifications of these qualities can suggest to the mind of man.

A language thus founded on the broad basis of nature, contained within itself the fruitful seeds of the imitative arts, and the rich materials of all that is *beautiful* and *grand* in literary composition.* It is a subject of equal curiosity and importance, to examine how these materials were wrought up, and how these seeds were unfolded. In attempting with much diffidence, to give some account of this delicate and refined operation, we shall observe the division above-mentioned, and consider the *melody*, *measure*, *variety* and *expression* of the Grecian poetry and music ; arts once deemed so intimately connected that their disjunction at the Pythian games, of which we have already taken notice, was emphatically compared by ancient writers to the separation of the soul and body.

The pleasure arising from the agreeable succession of sounds depends either on the combination of letters, or on that of musical tones.† The attention which the Greeks paid to the former, is evident from the whole structure of their language. Wherever propriety permits,‡ they always employ full, open, and *magnificent*|| sounds ; innumerable rules of flexion and derivation are founded merely on the pleasure of the ear ; and

* These words very adequately express the *ἡδὺς* and the *καλὸς* of Dionysius, de Struct. Orat. The ingenious and philosophical critic ranges under two heads, the qualities of style fitted to please the ear and the imagination. These are the *sweet* and the *fair*. Under the first are contained smoothness, beauty, grace, persuasion, &c. Under the second, dignity, weight, magnificence and force. The two kinds of style have a similar relation to each other, which the pleasures of the taste, expressed by the word *ἡδὺς*, have to those of the eye, expressed by *καλὸς*.

† Dionysius comprehends both under the word *μελὸς*, melody.

‡ The *το πρεπον*, Dionysius observes, may sometimes require harsh, close, and disagreeable sounds.

|| The *μεγαλοπρεπες* of Dionysius.

the great principle of the fine arts to move and affect, without fatiguing the senses, cannot be better illustrated than by the inimitable composition* of elements which characterizes the general texture of the Grecian tongue. Whether the ancient poets and orators discovered this composition by investigation, or only preferred it from taste, is a question that may be easily answered, if we reflect, that such a discovery by investigation supposes an acquaintance with the most abstruse principles of philosophy, principles altogether unknown in that early age, during which the composition of elemental sounds attained its highest beauty and perfection. We may therefore without temerity conclude, that sentiment first directed to the practice of those rules which reason afterwards approved; and that this progress equally obtained in the articulation of voice, and the intonation of sound.

The *latter*, the agreeable composition of which Melody of Music. is properly styled melody, was improved to such an extraordinary degree about the time of Homer, as rendered the productions of Olympus, and other ancient poet-musicians, the admiration of all succeeding ages. Unfortunately for the history of the arts, we have not any such analysis of the music of Olympus, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus has left us of the poetry of Homer. We are informed, however, that the ancient melody was not only divided, like the modern, by tones and semitones, but also distinguished by the diesis, or quarter-tone; an interval of which modern musi- The differ- cians rarely make use. The genus of music, regu- gent genera. lated by this interval, a genus to which the most powerful effects are ascribed by ancient writers, was known by the name of the enharmonic; the genus, proceeding by semitones, was called the chromatic; and the diatonic, which denotes a progression by tones and semitones, expressed a musical scale nearly resembling that of the modern nations of Europe.†

* As all languages are relative to the organs of speech, they may all be analyzed into about twenty-four letters, or elemental sounds, the combination of which, forms the wonderful variety of language; a variety resulting from the respective characters and circumstances of different nations.

† It is sufficient to explain the things signified by the enharmonic and dia-

These observations will give the reader an idea of the intervals in the different *genera*, which is all that we can learn on this subject from the learned collection of Meibonius. In none of the musical treatises in that collection do we find any specimen of ancient melody; nor are we enabled, by any circumstance mentioned in them, to ascertain the qualities which formed its principal merit. The invention of the peculiar effect of the enharmonic genus explained. The enharmonic genus explained. Plutarch ascribes to Olympus, who happened to skip certain intervals in the diatonic scale, observed the beauty of the effect, and the peculiar force and character which the regular omission of the same intervals bestowed on the melody. Upon this observation, he is said to have founded a new genus of music remarkable for simplicity, gravity, and grandeur. These qualities might, doubtless, be produced by the happy discovery, seconded by the lofty genius of Olympus; and to them, perhaps, we may refer the enthusiasm and sublimity by which his compositions were distinguished. The employing of the greater intervals supported the dignity and character, while the use of the diesis chiefly contributed to the refinement and delicacy of Grecian music. The bold separation of notes expressed the firmer feelings, and described the stronger emotions of the soul; while the more insensible distinctions of sound painted the innumerable shades and faint fluctuations of passion; as when the voice gradually ascended through the smallest perceptible divisions, it would admirably express the progress of a respectful but ardent affection, unable to hide, yet afraid to reveal its force, and striving by repeated efforts to overcome its natural timidity.

Connexion between the melody of language and music. But by whatever conjectures we may explain the powers of ancient enharmonic, it appears from the universal consent of Greek writers, that the melody of music and of language differed only in degree, not in kind. The variations of *accent*, for *that* is the proper word to

tonic. When, or why, these names were bestowed on the two kinds of music which they respectively denote, is disputed by philologists; and I have not met with any thing on the subject that seemed worthy of being transcribed.

express the melody of language, seldom exceeded, in common discourse, the difference of three notes and a half: which makes Dionysius observe, that it never exceeds the compass of one interval, the diapenté, or fifth. He pretends not, however, that in rhetorical declamation, the flexions of the voice were so narrowly circumscribed; and it is probable that in poetry, their range was always more extensive than in the most animated prose. When the poet therefore composed his verse, he was obliged to pay an equal attention to accent and to quantity: the acuteness and gravity of sounds, as well as the length and shortness of syllables, contributed to the effect of his art; and each particular word having not only its determined duration, but its appropriated tones, obtained that place in the verse which was felt to be most agreeable to the ear and best adapted to the subject. The poet therefore naturally performed the office of the musician, and clothed his own thoughts and sentiments with that combination of sounds, which rendered them most beautiful and expressive.

As accent regulated the melody, quantity regulated the rhythm of the ancient music. Of quantity and rhythm. The most melodious succession of tones, however flattering to the ear, must soon become tiresome and disgusting, when continued without interruption or pause, and undistinguished by such proportions of duration, as are readily seized and measured by the senses. This truth the Greeks illustrated by a comparison. The most brilliant composition of colours is nothing better, they observed, than a gaudy show, dazzling the sight for a moment, but, passing afterwards disregarded and unobserved. But to this showy colouring let the painter add the solid beauties of design, and he will convert an empty amusement of the eye, into an elegant entertainment of the fancy. What design is to colouring, measure is to melody. It is measure that animates the song, and which, combined with the inimitable charms of Grecian verse, produced those extraordinary effects, which the ignorance and credulity of early ages weakly deemed miraculous. On measure principally depended the different *modes* of music, by which the most opposite passions were alternately excited in the mind; and courage, pride, Of propriety and expression.

timidity, love, anger, resentment, successively diffused through a numerous assembly, at the will of a skilful composer. The difference of modes, indeed, arose also, in some measure, from the difference of key, and the same succession of sounds, pronounced with various degrees of acuteness or gravity, may doubtless produce effects more or less powerful : but dissimilar effects it never can produce ; so that the grandeur of the Doric, the polished elegance of the Ionic, the soothing sweetness of the Eolic mode,* must have resulted from the rhythm or measure, which governing the movement of the verse, thereby determined its expression.

Besides these three modes, formerly mentioned as the original invention of Greece, the natives of that country gradually adopted several others that had been discovered by the neighbouring nations ; particularly the Phrygian, consecrated to religious ceremonies ; and the Lydian, appropriated to the expression of complaint or sorrow. The variety, indeed, at length became greater than can be easily conceived by such as

Of the variety and perfection of Grecian music. are unacquainted with the mechanism of ancient languages. Every species of verse (and of verse there were above an hundred different kinds,) occasioned a change of musical measure, and introduced what, in musical language, may be called a different time. These measures were only to be employed agreeably to the rules of propriety and decorum, which had been discovered in those great principles of nature to which all rules of art must ultimately be referred. A slow succession of lengthened tones expressed moderation and firmness ; a rapid inequality of verse betrayed disorderly and ignoble passions ; the mind was transported by sudden transitions, and roused by impetuous reiterations of sound ; a gradual ascent of notes accorded with all those affections which warm and expand the heart ; and the contrary movement naturally coincided with such sentiments as depress the spirits, and extinguish the generous ardour of the soul. Having fixed, with the most accurate precision, the wide variety of *modes* and *genera*, the Greeks seldom confound-

* Lucian, Harmon, sub initio, & Heraclid. apud Athenæum, l. xiv.

ed them in the same piece, and never applied them to any subject which they had not been originally destined to express. The natural perceptions of taste were gradually strengthened by habit; the principles of music were clearly ascertained, and universally understood; and possessing the warmth and energy of the language of nature, they acquired the perspicuity and extent of the language of convention. This is justly deemed the height of musical perfection;* and to this height the Greeks had attained, in the beginning of the sixth century before Christ.

* The question, whether the Greeks knew music in parts, has been carefully examined by M. Burette, (*Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions*) by Rousseau (*Dictionnaire de Musique*); and by Dr. Burney (*History of Music*, vol. i. p. 146, and seq.) These writers, who are so well entitled to decide on this subject, pronounce the Greeks to have been unacquainted with counterpoint. But that their ignorance in this respect did not detract from the perfection, or diminish the effects of their music, may be credited on the unsuspicious testimony of an ingenious Italian. “Il contrapunto, essendo composto di varie parti, l’una acuta, l’altera grave, questa di andamento presto, quella di tardo, que hanno a trovarsi insieme, & ferir, l’orecchie ad un tempo, come potrebbe egli muovere mell’ animo nostro, una tal determinata passione, la quale, di sua natura, rechiede un determinato moto, et un determinato tuono?” Algarotti, *Saggio sopra. l’Opera in Musica*.

CHAP. VI.

The Grecian Bards.—Heroic Poetry.—Change of Manners.—Iambic or Satire.—Elegy.—Tyrtæus, Callinus, Mimnermus.—Life of Archilochus.—Terpander.—Lyric Poetry.—The Nine Lyric Poets.—Sappho, Alcæus, Anacreon, Myrtis, Corinna, Pindar.—Effects of the Sacred Games.—Strength.—Courage.—Contempt of Prejudices.—Taste.—Moral Principles.—Intellectual Powers.—Genius.

Early perfection of the Grecian music and poetry.

POETRY has described the wonderful effects of Grecian music ; and the inimitable excellence of ancient poets can alone render the description credible. Yet the early perfection of these elegant arts, asserted by the gravest writers of antiquity, seems extremely inconsistent with the received doctrines concerning the progress of civil society. Both in the ancient and modern world, the great system of practical knowledge, subservient to the useful purposes of human life, appears to have been slowly raised, and gradually extended, by successive trials, and reiterated efforts. Among savages, scarcely any distinction of professions takes place ; the activity of each individual supplies his own wants. During the intermediate stages of society, men are still condemned to a wide variety of occupations and their attention being distracted by a multiplicity of pursuits, it is impossible that, in any one art, they should reach proficiency, or even aspire to excellence. But, contrary to this observation, the Grecian music and poetry are represented as most perfect in their united state ; the immortal fathers of verse excelled alike, it is said, in all the various kinds of poetical composition ;* and their inimitable productions were

* We are told by Aristotle, in the 4th chapter of his Poetics, that Homer wrote an iambic poem, intituled *Margites*, bearing the same relation to comedy and satire, that the *Iliad* bears to tragedy and panegyric. Notwithstanding

so far from advancing, by a gradual progress, to perfection, that the most ancient are, by universal consent, entitled to a just preference.*

The history of these admired authors is, unfortunately, as uncertain, as their merit was illustrious. The Greeks possessing much traditionary and little recorded information concerning the antiquities of their country, the great inventors of arts, and generous benefactors of society, have been deprived of their merited fame and well-earned honours. Their names indeed, like firm rocks resisting the assaults of the ocean, bid defiance to the depredations of time; but of Linus, Orpheus, Musæus, and Melampus, little more than the names remain; and to determine the time in which they flourished, was a matter of as much difficulty two thousand years ago,† as it remains in the present age.

ing the express testimony of the great critic, two very elegant scholars have said, that the hexameter was the only kind of verse known in the time of Homer, the Abbé Arnaut, in his excellent discourse on the Greek accents; and M. Burette, in his Commentary on Plut. de Music.

* Græcorum antiquissima quæque scripta vel optima. Horat. Epist. l. ii. ep. 1.

† Herodotus, who read his history at the Olympic games, 444 years B. C. expresses himself as follows; "Homer and Hesiod lived about four hundred years ago; not more; and these are the poets who composed a Theogony for the Greeks; who assigned to the gods their respective appellations and epithets; distinguished their several forms, and defined the arts in which they excelled, and the honours to which they were entitled. As to the poets who are supposed to have preceded them, I am of opinion that they flourished in a later age." According to Herodotus, therefore, the age of Homer is fifty years later than it is placed by the marbles of Paros. But on this subject we have surer evidence than any monuments of marble, or even the testimony of Herodotus can afford. The circumstantial minuteness; and infinite variety, which characterize the Iliad and Odyssey, prove their inimitable author to have lived near the times which he describes. He conversed in his youth with those who had seen the heroes of the Trojan war; and, in the vigour of his age, beheld the grandchildren of Æneas, Ulysses, Achilles, and Agamemnon.

Νυν, δὲ δὴ Αἰνείας γενεὴ Τρωέσσι ἀνάσσει

Καὶ παῖδες παῖδων τοῖ καὶ μετόπισθε γένονται.

Iliad. xx. ver. 337.

The learned reader may consult the note on the passage in Clarke's Homer, where Dionysius of Halicarnassus is quoted, to prove that the poet says no-

Since even the chronology of the ancient bards is so extremely uncertain,* it cannot be expected that we should be able to give a circumstantial account of their life and writings. Instead of considering minutely, therefore, the private history of individuals, a task which suits neither the design of the present work, nor the incredulity of the present age, we shall endeavour to explain the general nature and tendency of their profession, as well as the circumstances which conspired to raise it to that rank and dignity which it long held in society. During the heroic ages, the Grecian poets had much uniformity of character; and if we may depend on the positive assertions of antiquity, the same individual was alike successful in the various branches of his divine art.† The earliest poets, therefore, may be represented in one picture, and delineated by the same strokes, until their profession came to be separated into different departments. We shall then distinguish the heroic, iambic, lyric, elegiac, and other kinds of poetical composition; offer some account of the improvers of each particular species; and examine such fragments of their works as deserve attention, not merely on account of their own intrinsic merit, but as genuine and authentic, and indeed the only genuine and authentic transcripts of the manners of that early age in which they were composed.

The Gre- In ancient Greece, the favourites of fortune were
cian bards. often the favourites of the muses. There remain not, indeed, the works of any Grecian king; but we are told by Homer, that Achilles sung to his lyre the glory of heroes; Amphion, to whose musical powers such wonderful‡ effects are ascribed, reigned in Thebes; the poet Melampus obtained

thing inconsistent with Æneas's voyage into Italy. It is to be observed that the force of the criticism evaporates in Mr. Pope's translation.

* The preceding note proves the ignorance of Herodotus, and his contemporaries, concerning the history of their ancient bards; since of these venerable fathers of the Grecian religion and policy, two are mentioned by Homer himself; Linus, in the description of the shield of Achillea, Il. xviii.; Melampus, in the 11th book of the Odyssey, ver. 15.

† There are not any two kinds of poetry more different than those ascribed to Homer by Aristotle, Poetic. chap. iv.

‡ Movet Amphion lapides canendo. Hor.

royal authority in Argos; and Chiron, the wise Centaur,* though descended of the most illustrious ancestors, and entitled to the first rank among the Thessalian princes, preferred to the enjoyment of power, the cultivation of poetry, and retired, with his favourite muses, to a solitary cavern at the foot of mount Pelion, which was soon rendered, by the fame of his attainments, the most celebrated school of antiquity.†

The musical arts not only excited the emulation of princes, but raised ordinary men to the highest rank in society. By excelling in such accomplishments, Anthes of Bœotia, Olen of Lycia, Olympus of Phrygia,‡ obtained the noblest pre-eminence. Nor was it during their lifetime only that they enjoyed the happy fruits of their elegant labours. They were regarded as peculiarly deserving of a double immortality; living for ever in the memory of men, and being admitted, according to the belief of antiquity, to the most distinguished honours in the celestial mansions.||

It has been already observed, that the texture of the Grecian tongue was singularly well adapted to the improvement of poetry; and this favourable circumstance was admirably seconded by the political condition of the Greeks in the early periods of their society. Religion then was the great or sole principle of government; and the belief of religion was chiefly supported by the Theogonies,§ while its ceremonies were principally adorned by the hymns of the bards. These two kinds

* Most of the heroes of the Trojan war were his disciples. Xenoph. de Venat. sub initio.

† Xenoph. *ibid.*

‡ M. Burette has collected the most interesting particulars concerning these bards, in his commentary on Plut. de Music.

|| Musæum ante omnes. Virg. *Æn.* vi. It is not easy to discover the reason why Virgil, in his Elysium, has placed Musæus before all the rest. This venerable bard, by some called the son, by others the disciple of Orpheus, is universally allowed to have been a native of Attica. The admirer of Grecian eloquence (Orabant Caussas melius) intended, perhaps, to compliment the country of Musæus.

§ A Theogony is a poem explaining not merely, as the name denotes, the generation, but also the history of the gods. Most of the ancient poets mentioned in the text wrote Theogonies. Diod. l. iii. Plut. de Music.

of poetry, doubtless the most ancient and the most venerable, formed the main pillars of the political edifice; and the essential parts of this edifice consisting in the praise of the gods, its brightest ornaments were composed of the glory of heroes. The hymns maintained the power of religion, the song animated to valour; and both powerfully affected that peculiar sensibility of temper, and that romantic turn of fancy, the prevailing characteristics of Greece during the heroic ages.

Neither the Rùners of the north, nor the Troubadours of Provence, nor the bards of Germany, nor even the Druids of Gaul and Britain, possessed

more distinguished authority than the Aoidoi, or Rhapsodists, of the Greeks. The first requisite of their profession was, to know many soothing tales;* and it was the daily object of their art, to delight gods and men.† The piety of the priest, and the inspiration of the prophet, were intimately connected with the enthusiasm of poetry; and poets, who had celebrated the glory of the past, were naturally employed to rear

the hopes of the future generation.‡ It is probable, however, that the ancient bards had frequent avocations from their literary labours. The curiosity, natural to men of genius, would frequently tempt them to visit distant countries. The admiration paid to their abilities could only be upheld by novelty. Both inclination and interest, therefore, would prompt them to sail to foreign lands, to examine their civil and religious institutions, and to converse with their priests and poets, from whom they might derive such information as would enable them, on their return home, to surprise, entertain, and instruct their fellow citizens.

Of all nations, the Greeks enjoyed most advantages for travelling; and of all Grecian professions, that of the bard. The general diffusion of their national language and colonies, as well

* Πολλα θελκτήρια. HOMER.

† Θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι αἰδεῖν. HOMER.

‡ In early ages, the education of youth was entrusted only to the first class in society. This profession was exercised in Greece by Homer, as we learn from his life, falsely ascribed to Herodotus, yet certainly very ancient. In Gaul it belonged to the Druids. Vid. Cæsar de Bello Gallico. l. vi.

as the sacred character with which they were invested, entitled this venerable class of men to expect a secure retreat among the most inhospitable Barbarians. Whatever country they visited, the elegant entertainment derived from their art procured them a welcome reception at religious festivals, and all public solemnities. Amidst the most dreadful calamities which afflict mankind, the bards alone were exempted from the common danger. They could behold in safety, the tumult of the battle; they could witness, undisturbed, the horror of a city taken by storm; calm and serene themselves, they might contemplate the furious conflicts, and wild agitations of the passions. It belonged to them only, and to the sacred character of the herald, to observe and examine, without personal danger, the natural expressions of fear, rage, or despair in the countenances and gestures of the vanquished, as well as the insolent triumph of success, the fury of resentment, the avidity of gain, and the thirst of blood, in the wild aspect and mad demeanour of the victors. Having considered at full leisure the most striking peculiarities of those agitated and distressful scenes, the poet might retire to his cavern or grotto, and there delineate, in secure tranquillity, such a warm and expressive picture of the manners and misfortunes of men, as should astonish his contemporaries, and excite the sympathetic terror and pity of the most distant posterity.

The respect belonging to their character, favourable to their poetical studies.

If the Grecian bards were fortunate in observing such events of their own age as best admitted the ornaments of poetical imitation, they were still more fortunate in living at a period which afforded a wonderful variety of such events. Amidst the unsettled turbulence of rising states, the foundation and destruction of cities, the perpetual wars and negotiations of neighbouring communities, they were daily presented with subjects worthy the grandeur of the heroic muse. The establishment of colonies, the origin of new superstitions, as well as the imaginary legends which supported the old, furnished copious materials for many a wondrous song. These materials, being eagerly embraced by the choice, were embellished by the fancy

Peculiar advantages of the age in which they lived.

of the early bards; who, continually rehearsing them to their contemporaries, had an opportunity of remarking, in their approbation or dislike, the circumstances necessary to be added, taken away, or altered, in order to give to their productions the happiest effect, and the highest degree of strength and beauty. As writing was little practised for the purpose of communicating knowledge, succeeding poets learned to re-

peat the verses of their predecessors; and, having treasured them in their memory, they adopted them as their own. Frequent repetition, attended with

such careful observations as were natural to men whose fame and fortune depended on the success of their art, produced new alterations and amendments;* and their performances, thus improving by degrees, acquired that just measure of perfection, to which nothing could with propriety be added, and from which nothing could with propriety be taken away. In this manner, perhaps, the Iliad and Odyssey received the last polish; the harmonious animation of poetry was admired as the language of the gods; and poets originally the ministers of heaven, the instructors of youth, and the rewarders of merit, were finally regarded as the great establishers of religion, the principal benefactors of mankind, and, as shall be explained hereafter, the wise legislators of nations.

As the singular manners and events of the heroic ages naturally produced the lofty strains of the epic muse, so the state of society in Greece, during the immediately succeeding periods highly favoured the

introduction of other kinds of poetry. The abolition of the royal governments gave free scope to the activity and turbulence of democracy; and the rivalships and enmities of neighbouring states, rankling in the minds of their citizens, prepared the imaginations of men for taking a malignant pleasure in works of invective and reproach. The innumerable causes of alienation, hatred and disgust, which operated also within the bosom of each little republic, opened an inexhausti-

* *Εγχεισαν την ποιητικην εκ των αυτοσχεδιασμάτων.*

ARISTOT. Poet. c. iv.

ble source of satire. The competitions for civil offices, for military command, and for other places of trust, profit, or honour, all of which were conferred by the free suffrages of the people, occasioned irreconcilable variance between the ambitious members of the same community, and subjected the characters of men to mutual scrutiny and remark. The sentiments of the Greeks, not being perverted by the habits of slavery, nor restrained by the terrors of a despot, they boldly expressed what they freely thought; they might openly declare a just contempt; and while they extolled in the lofty ode and swelling panegyric the heroes and patriots whom they admired, they lashed the cowards and traitors whom they despised, with all the severity of satire.

The ode and satire may be successfully cultivated by imitators in the worst of times; but they could scarcely have been invented and perfected under any other than a popular government. The plaintive elegy, on the other hand, which describes the torments of unsuccessful love, or which paints the affliction of a miserable parent, an affectionate son, a disconsolate wife, or a faithful friend, for the loss of the several objects most dear to their hearts, seems to be the spontaneous production of every soil, and hardly to receive any change of impression from the fluctuating forms of society.

Elegiac
verse.

The particular purposes, however, to which the Greeks principally applied this species of poetry, appear to have been suggested by their peculiar circumstances at the time of its origin. During the violence and disorder occasioned by the political revolutions, the frequent migrations and the almost uninterrupted hostilities which succeeded and increased the calamities of the Trojan war, it was natural for those who reasoned concerning the affairs of men, to form, according to the original or acquired bent of their minds, two opposite theories for the best improvement of human life. Men of a firm texture of soul would prepare for the misery which awaited them, by strengthening their natural hardiness, and fortifying their natural intrepidity. The contempt of pain, and danger, and death, would be the great principle of their lives, and the

The purposes to which it was applied naturally suggested by the state of society.

perpetual subject of their song; and while they described the inevitable disgrace of weakness and cowardice, they would extol, with the most lively sensibility, the glory of valour, the triumphs of success, and the joys of victory. Such themes might delight the martial muse of Tyrtæus and Callinus, but could offer no charms to the effeminate softness of Mimnermus, or to the licentious debauchery of Archilochus. To persons of their character, the calamities of the times, instead of appearing an argument for virtue, would prove an incitement to pleasure. The precarious condition of their lives and fortunes, while it depreciated all other objects, would increase the value of present enjoyment. In the agreeable amusements of the fleeting hour, they would seek refuge against the melancholy prospect of futurity. The pleasures of the table, the delights of love, the charm of the elegant arts and of conversation, would be perpetually studied in their lives, and perpetually recommended in their poetry.

These observations illustrated by the history of Archilochus. Olymp. xv. 3. A. C. 718.

The precious remains of their writings, and still more the authentic circumstances related concerning the characters of the ancient poets, sufficiently confirm the truth of these observations. Next to Homer, Archilochus is the earliest Greek writer, whose life is recorded so minutely as may serve to throw any considerable light on the history of his country. We are told by Herodotus,* that he flourished in the time of Gyges king of Lydia, who mounted the throne seven hundred and eighteen years before Christ. He was a native of the isle of Paros, one of the Cyclades, which had already become wealthy and populous. His father, Telesicles, must have been a person of distinction, since he was employed to head a deputation of his countrymen to the oracle of Apollo. The object of the Parians was to obtain a favourable answer from the god concerning an enterprise, which they had long meditated, of settling a colony in the valuable island of Thasos, opposite to the coast of Thrace. The oracle approved the design, and in order to reward the respectful behaviour, and to repay the rich presents delivered to the holy shrine by Telesicles, who had un-

* Lib. i. cap. 12.

fortunately disgraced the dignity of his rank by an unequal marriage with a beautiful slave named Enipo, declared that the fame of Archilochus, the glorious fruit of this dishonourable connexion, should descend to the latest ages of the world.

The prophecy would naturally contribute to its own accomplishment; especially as Archilochus descended from a family in which the love of poetry was an hereditary passion. Tellis, his grandfather, accompanied the priestess of Ceres, in order to establish the Eleusinian mysteries, in the isle of Thasos, an employment which, like the sacred commission of Telesicles at the city of Apollo, could not have been exercised by any other than a favourite of the Muses. Enjoying the example of such ancestors, and encouraged by the admonition of the god, it was to be expected that the young poet should second the gifts of nature by the efforts of industry; and that his juvenile productions should soon have been distinguished above those of his contemporaries, by dignity of sentiment, force of expression, and beauty of imagery.

In that martial age, no superiority of genius, rank or fortune could exempt its possessor from the duty of serving his country in the exercise of arms.* The Parian colony in Thasos, having ineffectually endeavoured by its own strength to establish a settlement in Thrace, was obliged, in order to accomplish this design, to have recourse to the assistance of the parent isle. Archilochus served in this expedition, which, though finally successful, was chequered with a great variety of fortune. During an engagement with the barbarous Thracians, in which his countrymen were defeated and put to flight, he saved his life by throwing away his shield; an action so abhorrent from the military prejudice of the age, that all his eloquence and ingenuity were incapable of extenuating its infamy.

On his return home, he renewed his addresses to a Parian

* This was not the case in the heroic ages; the bards, though called *Hpoas*, as being of the first rank in society, were exempted from the fatigues of war. Hom. Odyss. passim.

damsel named Neobulè. Her father Lycambes, who had at first granted, afterwards refused his consent, whether disgusted by the unwarlike and therefore despised character of Archilochus, or tempted by the alluring offers of a richer rival. If we believe the poet, it was avarice alone that corrupted the sordid mind of Lycambes; and both he and his daughter, regardless of their plighted faith and repeated oaths, sacrificed their sentiments and character to the mean gratification of this ignoble passion.

This assertion he maintained by his poetical invectives, full of indignation and resentment against the whole family of the supposed traitors. His verses were rehearsed at the public games, where the force and vivacity of the satire were universally admired. Calumny, however, seems to have joined her poisoned darts to the more fair and equitable weapons employed by the anger of disappointed love. Neobulè and her sisters were accused of every vice most inconsistent with the modest dignity of the female character. Yet such an accusation is extremely improbable, considering the reserved circumspection of Neobulè herself, during the ardent solicitations of Archilochus; a behaviour which naturally increased the fire of his passion, and sharpened the edge of his satire.

His reproach and calumny, however ill-grounded and unreasonable, gained an easy credit among the rivals, and enemies of Lycambes; and the bitter taunts and invectives, which the malice of the poet had invented, the scornful contempt of the Parians too faithfully retained. An old poem was no sooner in danger of being forgotten than it was succeeded by new verses, couched in the liveliest turns of ingenious satire. The perpetual strokes of malevolence, darted against the family of Lycambes by the persevering cruelty of the poet, rendered their characters suspicious to the public, and their lives painful to themselves. They determined to withdraw from a scene, which seemed a constant variation of misery; and died in despair by their own hands.

The poems which produced this melancholy effect, and of which some scattered remains have reached the present times,

were written in iambic* verse of six and four feet. When the lines were of the same length throughout, the piece was entitled an iambic; and when short and long verses alternately succeeded each other, it was called, from this circumstance, an epode;† a name which Horace has given to those performances in which he imitated the poetry and spirit of Archilochus, not copying, with servility, his sentiments and expression.‡

Though iambic was the favourite|| pursuit of Archilochus, his genius was not entirely confined to that species of writing. Endowed with an extreme sensibility of heart, he was inclined to gratitude and friendship, as well as to enmity and resentment. Animated by the former sentiments, he lamented the death of a kinsman and friend, who had unfortunately perished by shipwreck. The piece consisted of alternate hexameter and pentameter verses, and abounded in elegiac strains, which were admired by the greatest critics of antiquity. The sublime Longinus, in particular, extols the affecting description of the shipwreck; and Plutarch§ has preserved the conclusion of the piece, in which the poet, having asserted the hurtfulness of sorrow to the living, and its inutility to the dead, determines thenceforth to abstain from unavailing lamentations, and to seek relief for his affliction in wine, love, and other sensual pleasures.

These sentiments of Archilochus seem to prove His malignity.
that whatever may have been the poetical merit of

* The term iambic is synonymous in Greek with the words reproachful, satirical. Arist. Poet.

† This word, concerning the meaning of which there have been innumerable disputes, simply denotes the succession of verses or stanzas of different length or structure. In the first sense it is explained in the text; in the second it will be explained in speaking of the ode, of which the epode regularly formed the third stanza, as we learn from Hephæstion, Terentianus Maurus, Marius Victorinus, and other ancient grammarians and philologists.

‡ Parios ego primus iambos

Ostendi Latio, numeros animosque secutus

Archilochi, non res, & agentia verba Lycamden.

Epist. lib. i. 19.

|| Archilochum propria rabies arnavit iambo.

§ De audiend. Poet.

his elegy, the tender passions were less fitted than the irascible, to make a durable impression on his heart. He soon forsook the elegiac muse; and his natural disposition, as well as the fame which he had already acquired by his satires, led him to pursue this species of writing with unabating ardour. The perpetual rivalships and competitions among the principal Parian citizens, who aspired at the first offices of government, frequently degenerating into hatred, malice, and revenge, they observed, with infinite delight, the aspersions, however foul and false, that were cast on their opponents. The malignity of the public thus nourished and exasperated the venom of the poet; but there was a degree of virulence beyond which it could not with safety proceed. After making the circle of the whole society, and equally offending friends and foes by his excessive and indiscriminate reproach, Archilochus came to be regarded as a public enemy. The licentious impurity of his manners, which bade defiance to every law of decency and of nature, heightened the detestation of his character; and he was compelled to fly in disgrace from his native island, to which his genius would have been an ornament, had his behaviour been less offensive.*

**Banish-
ment.** Banished from the isle of Paros, the poet sought protection in the Thasian colony, to the establishment of which the services of his father had so eminently contributed; but, unfortunately for his repose, the fame of his satires had gone before him, and the disgrace of having lost his shield in the Thracian expedition was a stain not easily wiped off. His reception among the Thasians, therefore, answered neither his own expectations, nor the liberal spirit of ancient hospitality. He soon quitted a place in which his company was so little acceptable, yet not before he had lampooned the principal citizens of Thasos, and with a whimsical and absurd excess of resentment, satirised the narrowness and sterility of the island itself.

* Critias apud Ælian. Hist. l. ix. c. xiii.

The wandering poet was not more fortunate in several other districts of Greece, in which he took refuge. The warlike Spartans would scarcely admit into their city, a writer who had said that a soldier did well to save his person by losing his shield, because he might purchase new armour, but could not recover a new life. Archilochus, thus abandoned, persecuted, and contemned, made one spirited effort for recovering his ancient character and regaining the public esteem. The time approached for celebrating the Olympic festival. The irregularity of his manners, the general detestation of his behaviour as a soldier, and, above all, his avowed vindication of cowardice, should, according to received rules, have excluded him from assisting at that solemnity: but, having removed the prejudices which the citizens of Elis naturally entertained against him, by displaying his wonderful talents for music and poetry, he took care to insinuate that he was possessed of an ode in praise of Hercules, which, if rehearsed before the public assembly, would equally entertain the fancy and improve the piety of the spectators. The interest of religion being materially concerned in this proposal, the judges of the games thought proper to comply with it. Archilochus appeared on the appointed day among the Olympic bards. After his competitors had given specimens of their art in such musical compositions as the audience were accustomed to hear, he began the song in honour of Hercules, accompanied with the sound of his lyre, and written with such new variations of verse, as necessarily occasioned new modulations of melody. It is probable that, on this occasion, he first practised the invention ascribed to him by Plutarch,* of passing, with rapidity, from one rhythm, or measure, to another of a different kind. The novelty, the beauty, and the grandeur of his composition, ravished the senses and elevated the souls of his hearers. The demerit of the performer was obliterated in the perfection of his song. The unanimous applause of the assembly declared his

Recovers
the public
esteem at
Olympia.

* De Music.

superiority to every rival, and he was immediately rewarded by the prize, and adorned with the crown of victory.*

Having acquired such distinguished renown in the public theatre of assembled states, Archilochus returned with exultation to his native country, the glory of which had been proclaimed at Olympia, in consequence of the successful merit of a banished citizen. This proclamation being deemed the highest honour which an individual could procure for his community, the hatred and resentment formerly entertained against the poet was converted into gratitude and admiration. The renewed respect of his country occasioned many ebullitions of poetical vanity, which evaporated in some verses that have reached the present times.† When death put an end to his labours, it served only to heighten his fame. His obsequies were distinguished by every sad circumstance of funeral pomp; and his memory was celebrated by a festival, established by the gratitude of his countrymen, and adopted by the general admiration of the Greeks, during which the verses of Archilochus were sung alternately with the poems of Homer:‡ and thus, by a fatality frequently attending men of genius, he spent a life of misery, and acquired honour after death. Reproach, ignominy, contempt, poverty, and persecution, were the ordinary companions of his person; admiration, glory, respect, splendour, and magnificence were the melancholy attendants of his shade.

Archilochus was the principal improver, not only of the iambic, but of the graver kind of lyric poetry; and Terpander, who flourished in the same age, was, as far as we can trace the history of the arts, the chief promoter of the gay and festive kinds of lyric composition. This agreeable poet was a native of Lesbos. He ob-

* We learn from Pindar and his scholiast, Ode Olym. ix. that this celebrated poem of Archilochus long continued to be sung at the Olympic games, in order to grace the coronation of those victors who either could not afford, or who did not incline, to purchase an ode in their particular honour.

† Athenæus, l. xiv. Pausanias, l. x. Stobæus, serm. 123.

‡ Anthol. p. 212. Aristot. Rhetor. l. ii.

tained the musical prize in the Carnean festival at Sparta; and in the beginning of the seventh century before Christ, gained four successive prizes at Delphi, as appeared by a correct register of the conquerors in the Pythian games, preserved in the time of Plutarch.* These advantages procured him the respect of his contemporaries; but he was honoured by posterity chiefly for his improvement of the lyre, and for the new varieties of measure which he introduced into the Grecian poetry.†

The example of Archilochus and‡ Terpander was followed by the nine Lyric poets, who, in the course of two centuries, flourished almost in regular succession, and maintained the poetic fame of their country. Of the two most ancient, Alcman and Stesichorus, we have only a few imperfect remains: of Sappho there are two complete odes; her followers, Alcæus, Simonides, Ibycus, and Bacchilides, are known by a few mutilated fragments, and by the remarks of ancient critics; but we still possess many inimitable odes of Pindar, and many pleasant songs of Anacreon.

As to the Grecian lyrists in general, it is worthy Sappho, Alcæus, &c. of observation, that except Alcman of Sardis, who on account of his merit was naturalized at Sparta, Pindar of Thebes in Bœotia, and Stesichorus of Himera in Sicily, all the rest were born on the Asiatic coast, or in the islands of the Ægean sea. The soft beauty of these enchanting climates was the best adapted to inspire the raptures peculiar to the ode, as well as to excite that voluptuous gaiety characteristic of the Grecian song.|| Amidst the romantic scenes of Ionia, was felt with uncommon sensibility the force of that pleasing painful passion, which, uniting grief, joy, and enthusiasm,

* De Music.

† Euclid. Harmon. Strabo. l. xiii.

‡ Πινδαρος φησὶ ὅτι τῶν σχολίων μέλων Τερπανδρὸς εὐρετὴν εἶναι. Plut. de Music. "Pindar says that Terpander invented the Scholia," which, according to Pollux and Hesychius, properly denote the drinking songs of the Greeks; but, in a more general sense, signify every kind of lyric poetry not aspiring to the dignity of the ode.

|| Hippocrat. de Locis. vol. ii. p. 346. Edit. Lugd. Bat.

contains the fruitful seeds of whatever is most perfect in music and poetry.* Here the celebrated Sappho breathed the amorous flames by which she was consumed; while her countryman and lover Alcæus declared the warmth of his attachment, excited less perhaps by the beauty of her person, than by the bewitching charms of her voice. But neither Alcæus, who flourished in the beginning of the sixth, nor Anacreon, who flourished in the beginning of the fifth century before Christ, allowed the natural vivacity of their tempers to be overcome by the severities of a passion which they considered chiefly as an instrument of pleasure. When unfortunate in love, they had recourse to wine; and their lively invitations to this enjoyment composed the favourite *airs* of antiquity.† Of Alcæus it is usual to judge by the scattered remains of his works preserved in Plutarch‡ and Athenæus,|| and by the high commendations bestowed on him by Horace and Quintilian. The Latin poet, however, seems on many occasions to have so exactly imitated, or rather translated the Greek, that the copy will perhaps best enable us to form a complete idea of the original.¶

Alcæus, though he chiefly indulged in the gay and sportive strains of poetry, was yet qualified to undertake more lofty¶ themes; but the whole soul of Anacreon was of that effeminate texture which fitted him only to sing of love and pleasure.** Venus, Bacchus, Cupid, and the Graces, were the peculiar divinities whom he adored; and the presents

* Agreeably to the principles established by Theophrastus in Plutarch's Symposium.

† Give us a song of Alcæus or Anacreon, was a common saying in the age of Socrates. Athenæus, l. x. c. viii.

‡ Sympos. c. vi.

|| Lib. x.

¶ *Μηδεν αλλο φυτειν της προτερον δενδρον αμπελου.* ALC.

Nullam, Vare, sacra vite, prius severis arborem.

Other translations, equally literal, may be discovered by carefully examining the fragments in Athenæus. l. x.

¶ In *lusu & amores descendit, majoribus tamen aptior.* QUIX. l. x. c. 1.

** *Α θαρβετος δε χορδαις*

Ερωτα μουνον ηχει—

ANAC. Od. i.

which he offered at their shrine were the most acceptable that any votary could bestow. He not only observed the external rites and ceremonies which they commanded, but proved that his heart and mind had imbibed the genuine spirit of their worship. Throughout the whole of his works now remaining,* we find the most inimitable simplicity, purity, and sweetness of diction: his verses flow with a smooth volubility; his images, sentiments, and reasonings (if what in him seems intuitive convictions can be called reasoning) are copied from the warmest impressions of nature. Yet in these poems, otherwise so beautiful and so perfect, there may be discovered an extreme licentiousness of manners and a baneful voluptuousness of fancy, extending beyond the senses, and tainting the soul itself.

The dissolute gaiety of Anacreon, the delicate ^{Stesichorus.} sensibility of Sappho, and the tearful complaints of Simonides,† were all expressed in that easy equable flow of uninterrupted harmony, which, in the opinion of the most learned of their countrymen,‡ displays more grace than strength, and more beauty than grandeur. The majestic muse of Stesichorus soared a loftier pitch. Disdaining the subjects to which the other lyrists descended, he sung of war and heroes, and supported by his harp, the whole weight and dignity of epic poetry.§ Such, at least, are the sentiments of a celebrated critic, who had read his works, of which we are at present entitled to judge only by their resemblance to those

* The works of Anacreon are said, by Petrus Alcyonius de exilioto have been burned by the Greek priests of Constantinople, from which some learned men, destitute of taste, have absurdly concluded, that the works ascribed to the old poet are spurious. It cannot, surely, be said of those poems, "Etsi excitant animos nostrorum hominum ad flagrantiorum religionis cultum, non tamen verborum Atticorum proprietatem & linguæ Græcæ elegantiam decet;" which is the character that Petrus Alcyonius gives of the compositions substituted by the priests in their place.

† *Mœstius lachrymis Simonideis.* CATULL.

‡ Dionysius Halicarn.

§ *Epici carminis onerâ lyra sustinentem.* QUINT.

of Pindar, who was stamped with a similar form of genius, and treated the same lofty themes.

The honours bestowed on Pindar by his contemporaries, as well as the admiration in which his name was uniformly held by the most improved nations of antiquity, render both his person and his works objects of a very natural curiosity. He was born five hundred and twenty years before Christ, and his long life almost completed the full revolution of a century. His age, therefore, extended beyond the period of history now under our review ; yet the works of his predecessors having perished by the ravages of time and barbarism, it is necessary to examine, in this place, the nature and character of the writings of Pindar, as the only materials remaining that can enable us to form a general notion of the performances recited by the lyric poets at the principal Grecian solemnities. Pindar, from his earliest years, was carefully trained by his father (himself a musician) to the studies of music and poetry. His genius, naturally wild and luxuriant, was corrected by the lessons of his fair countrywomen, Myrtis and Corinna,* whose poetical productions had acquired unrivaled fame, not only in Thebes, but in many neighbouring cities.† His first efforts for equaling their renown were displayed at the musical contests celebrated in his native country ; where, after conquering Myrtis, he was five times overcome by Corinna, who, could we believe the voice of scandal, owed her repeated victories more to the charms of her beauty than to the superiority of her genius.‡ But in the four public assemblies of Greece, where females were not admitted to contend, Pindar carried off the prize from every competitor. The glory, in particular, which his poetry both gained and conferred at Olympia, made the greatest generals and statesmen of the age court the friendship of his muse. To the temples of the gods, and especially to the celebrated temple of Delphi,

The admiration in which Pindar was held.

* Pausanias, l. ix. c. xxii.

‡ Pausan. *ibid.*

† Lucian. *Ælian. Var. Hist.*

his hymns and pæans drew an extraordinary concourse of Greeks and strangers. The priests, prophets, and other ministers of Apollo, sensible of the benefits which they derived from his musical fame, repaid the merit of his services by erecting his statue in the most conspicuous part of the temple, and declared by their organ the Pythia, that Pindar should be honoured with one-half of the first fruit offerings annually presented by the devout retainers of the Delphian shrine.* Pindar was thus, during his lifetime, associated to the honours of the gods; and, after his death, his memory was adorned by every mark of respect that public admiration can bestow. The beauty of the monument, erected to him by his fellow-citizens in the Hippodrome of Thebes, was admired after the revolution of six centuries.† At the Theoxonian festival, a portion of the sacred victim was appropriated, even as late as the time of Plutarch, to the descendants of the poet. The inveterate hostility of the Spartans, when they destroyed the capital of their ancient and cruellest enemies, spared the house of Pindar, which was equally respected in a future age by the warlike and impetuous son of Philip, and the giddy triumph of his Macedonian captains.‡

Pindar, we are told, acquired unrivaled fame by his hymns to Jupiter, his pæans to Apollo, and his dithyrambics to Bacchus. But as all these works have perished, as well as his love verses, his elegies, and his Parthenia,|| we are unfortunately obliged to confine our observations to the odes, which were rehearsed at the sacred games, in praise of the conquerors in the gymnastic and equestrian contests. These conquerors being persons of the first distinction in Greece, the poet takes occasion to celebrate the splendour of their past lives, the dignity of their character, the fame of their ancestors, and the glory of their several republics. The tutelary deities§ to whom they owed their fe-

Division
and nature
of his works.

* Pausan. Phocic.

† Pausan. Bæotic.

‡ Polyb. Histor.

|| Sung, as the word denotes, by a chorus of virgins.

licity, are not forgotten ; and hence, by an easy transition, the poet passes to the worship of the god in whose honour the games were established ; to the adoration of the heroes by whom they were constituted or confirmed ; and to innumerable other episodes, which are often more interesting and more beautiful than the original subject.

Such, most commonly, are the materials of the ode ; and its form usually consisted of three stanzas, of which the two first were of an equal length, and either of them longer than the third. This arrangement was introduced as most suitable to the occasion of the poem, as well as to the scene on which it was rehearsed. The occasion was the solemn sacrifice, accompanied by a public entertainment given to the spectators by the friends of the successful candidate for Olympic fame. Grateful acknowledgments to the gods formed a principal part of the ceremony, which could not, without impiety, be omitted by the victor, who had obtained so honourable a prize through the assistance of his protecting divinity. On the altar of this divinity the sacrifice was performed ; and in his temple was sung the panegyric poem, containing the united praises of the beneficent god and of his favoured votary. The chorus waited, as usual, to begin the song, till the preparations were made for the feast. They repeated the first stanza, properly called *strophè*, while they gracefully danced, towards the right, round the well-replenished altar ; returning, in an opposite direction, to the place from which they set out, they recited the second stanza, therefore called *antistrophè* ; then standing motionless before the altar, and, as it were, in the immediate presence of the divinity, with whose statue it was adorned, they sung the concluding stanza, with a richer exuberance, and more complicated variations, of melody.* The ode, therefore, was distinguished from other pieces of poetry, not by being set to music† (for this was common to them all,) but by

* Marius Victorinus de Gram. and the Scholia on Hephæstion.

† This error runs through the whole of the otherwise very sensible discourse of Mr. Charbanon on lyric poetry, in the *Memoires de l'Academie*.

being sung by a chorus, who accompanied the various modulations of the voice with suitable movements and attitudes of the body.

The lyric poetry of the Greeks thus united the pleasures of the ear, of the eye, and of the understanding. In the various nature of the entertainment consisted its essential merit and perfection; and *he* only could be entitled the prince of lyric poets, whose verses happily conspired with the general tendency of this complicated exhibition. By the universal consent of antiquity, this poet is Pindar, whom, ever since the eulogium of Horace, critics have extolled for the brilliance of his imagination, the figurative boldness of his diction, the fire, animation, and enthusiasm of his genius. The panegyrics bestowed on him have generally more of the wildness of the ode, than of the coolness of criticism; so that the peculiar nature of his excellences may still deserve to be explained. It will be allowed by every one who reads his works with attention, that great as his ideas are, Pindar is not more distinguished by the sublimity of his thoughts and sentiments, than by the grandeur of his language and expression; and that his appropriate and *inimitable** excellence consists in the energy, propriety, and magnificence of his style, so singularly fitted to associate with the lengthened tones of music, and the figured movements of the dance. The uniform cadence, the smooth volubility, and the light unimportance of ordinary composition, are extremely ill adapted to this association, which bringing every single word into notice, and subjecting it to observation and remark, must expose its natural meanness, insignificance, and poverty. But as much as the language of ordinary writers would lose, that of Pindar will assuredly gain by such an examination. His words and phrases are chosen with an habitual care, and stamped with impression of grace and dignity, which, the more they are contemplated, must be the more admired. It is this magnificence of diction, those compound epithets, and

His characteristic excellence.

* *Pindarum quisquis studet emulari*, &c.

those glowing expressions, (which the coldness of criticism has sometimes condemned as extravagant,) that form the transcendent merit of the Pindaric style, and distinguish it even more than the general flow of the versification, which is commonly so natural, free, and unrestrained, that instead of the monotony incident to poetic numbers, it breathes all the richness of the most beautiful and harmonious prose. It is not meant, however, that this great poet paid more attention to the choice, than to the arrangement, of words. The majesty of the *composition* equaled, and in the opinion of a great critic, even surpassed the value of the materials. Dionysius, the critic to whom I allude, has explained by what admirable refinements of art, Pindar gave to his words a certain firmness and solidity of consistence, separated them at wide intervals, placed them on a broad base, and raised them to a lofty eminence, from which they darted those irradiations of splendour, that astonished the most distant beholders.

But the most exalted fame cannot extend with equal facility to distance of time and to distance of place. The poems of Pindar are now deprived of their accompaniments of music and dancing, by which they were formerly ennobled and adorned. They are now read in the retirement of the closet without personal interest and without patriotic emotion. They were anciently sung to large assemblies of men, who venerated the religion which they described, revered the characters whom they celebrated, and felt the influence of that piety and patriotism which they were admirably calculated to uphold. Such passages as may appear most exceptionable in the cool moments of solitary study, would obtain the highest applause amidst the joyous animation of social triumph, when men are naturally disposed to admire every happy boldness of expression, and to view with unusual rapture, the roivings of those lofty flights which elevate the daring muse of Pindar.

Physical
effects of
the public
games.

In examining the effects of the games as institutions for bodily exercise and mental improvement, it is necessary to reflect, not only on the universality of their establishment; but on the frequency of their

repetition. Besides the public solemnities already described, innumerable provincial festivals were celebrated in each particular republic. The Athenians employed near a third part of the year in such amusements; and if we may be allowed to conjecture, that those communities which instituted most festivals, would most excel in the arts and exercises displayed in them, we may conclude from the national designations of the Olympic victors preserved in ancient authors, that the number of the Athenian festivals was rivaled by that of several other states.

For these warlike and elegant amusements, the youth were carefully trained by the discipline of the gymnasia, in which they learned whatever can give strength and agility to the limbs, ease and grace to the motions, force and beauty to the genius. Bodily strength and agility were accompanied by health and vigour of constitution. Their athletic hardiness bore, without inconvenience, the vicissitudes of cold and heat. Even in the scorching warmth* of July (for that was the season of the Olympic games,) they received, bareheaded, but unhurt, the direct rays of the sun: and the firm organization, acquired by perpetual exercise, counteracted that fatal propensity to vicious indulgence, too natural to their voluptuous climate, and produced those inimitable models of strength and beauty, which are so deservedly admired in the precious remains of Grecian statuary.

These corporeal advantages were followed by a train of higher excellences to which they are nearly allied. There is a courage depending on nerves and blood, which was improved to the highest pitch among the Greeks. They delight, says Lucian,† to behold the combats of bold and generous animals; and their own contentions are still more animated. In the memorable war with Persia, they showed the superiority of their national courage: and it is worthy of observation, that the most signal exploits were performed in the field of battle by those who had been previously

* Lucian, Solon.

† In Solon.

adorned with the Olympic crown. It was a general boast, that one Grecian could conquer ten Persians;* and the suggestions of reason tend to confirm the evidence of history. In the battles of the Greeks and Persians, victory was not obtained by the mechanical exertions of distant hostility. The contest was decided by the point of the sword and spear. The use of these weapons required activity in the limbs, steadiness of the eye, and dexterity of the hand. It improves the courage as well as the vigour of the soldier; and both qualities were admirably promoted by the habitual exercises of the gymnasia, which inspired not only the spirit to undertake, but the ability to execute, the most dangerous and difficult enterprises.

and temperance. The gymnastic arts promoted other attainments of a nobler nature than bodily accomplishment and courage. Chiefly by *their* influence, the love of pleasure and the love of action, the two most powerful principles in the human breast, were directed to purposes not only innocent but useful. The desire of an Olympic crown restrained alike those weaknesses which form the disgrace, and those vices which form the guilt and misery of undisciplined minds; and an object of earthly and perishable ambition led to the same external purity and temperance, that is recommended by the precepts, and enforced by the sanctions, of a divine and immutable religion. The oil, the crown, the robes, and the palms compose not the *only* resemblances between the Christian and the Olympic victors. These visible images have been borrowed indeed by the sacred writers, to assist our imperfect conception of divine truths;† but they have been borrowed from an institution which resembles Christianity, not in the honours and rewards which it proposed, but in the efforts and duties which it enjoined. The ambition of honest fame‡ taught men to control the

* Herodot. l. viii.

† 1 Corinth. 9th chapter, four last verses.

‡ Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,

Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit & alait,

Abstinuit venere & vino.

appetites of the body by the affections of the soul ; the springs of emulation repressed the allurements of sensuality ; one dangerous passion combatted another still more dangerous ; and a train of useful prejudices supported the cause, and maintained the ascendant, of virtue.

Many of the peculiarities which distinguish the Greeks from the mass of ancient and modern nations, seemed to have derived their origin from the same useful institutions ; particularly the custom of going unarmed, and their perpetual contempt for the capricious notions concerning the point of honour. These high-minded republicans were accustomed, in the private gymnasias and palæstras, as well as at the public games and solemnities, to inflict and to suffer the most provoking indignities. A barbarous Scythian, who witnessed a spectacle that seemed to him as shocking and intolerable as it would appear to a punctilious modern gentleman, declared to his Athenian conductor, that if any one ventured on offering the same insults to him, which the Athenian youths were continually offering to each other, he would soon convince the assembly, that his sword was not an empty ornament of his person, but an useful guardian of his honour.* Such were the sentiments of the Scythian ; and such, as history attests, are the sentiments of all uncultivated minds. An untutored Barbarian sets no bounds to his resentment. The smallest injury renders his anger implacable ; his indignation against the offender being proportioned, not to the nature of *his* offence, but to his own pride, which is boundless. The slightest fault requires the severest atonement ; and not only a blow, but a word, or a look, may inflict a stain on the delicacy of his supposed honour, which can only be washed out in the blood of the aggressor. The excesses of this brutish fierceness, before they were corrected by the refinements of Grecian philosophy, were repressed by the habitual practice of the gymnastic exercises. In the schools appropriated to the advancement of these manly arts,

Contempt
for the mo-
dern no-
tions con-
cerning the
point of ho-
nour.

* Lucian Anacharsis.

the Greeks learned the valuable lesson of repelling injuries by others of a similar kind, of proportioning the punishment to the offence, and of thus preventing a slight occasion of animosity from degenerating into a permanent cause of rancorous revenge.

If any citizen of those warlike republics had worn armour in times of peace, he must have been regarded either as a madman or as an assassin; for to the chastised principles of Grecian discipline, it would have appeared altogether absurd, that the sword or dagger should be thought necessary to retaliate the reproaches of the tongue, or even the more daring insults of the arm.

Emulation
and re-
wards of
the victors.

The entertainments of the public festivals thus tended to eradicate the wild excesses of resentment, and to improve the mild and gentle virtues; but considered in another view, the same entertainments were calculated to promote ardour, emulation, friendship, patriotism, and all the animated principles and contentions of active life. The rewards bestowed on the conquerors were the most flattering which in that age could be proposed. Odes were sung in their praise; statues were erected to them on the scene of victory; the names of their parents and country were jointly celebrated with their own; they were entitled to the first seats at all public entertainments; maintained at the expense of their respective communities; and in their native cities, rewarded not only with monuments and inscriptions, but sometimes with altars and temples. Of these honours and rewards, the appropriated symbols were the olive, the pine, the parsley, and the laurel crowns; which were respectively distributed to the several victors at Olympia, the Isthmus, Nemea, and Delphi. Observing the small value of these badges of distinction, without adverting to the solid benefits which they conferred, the Persian Tigranes would have dissuaded his master from going to war with a people, who, insensible to interest, fought only for glory.* But had Tigranes been more

* The word is *αρετης* in the original; but here means the reward of virtue. Vid. Herodot. l. viii. c. 26.

completely informed concerning the institutions of Greece, he would have understood, that both interest and glory operated most powerfully upon the candidates for Olympic fame, and not only their personal interests, but those of their friends, their parents and their country, who being associated to their honours, were regarded by them with that fondness of affection which men naturally feel for the objects of their protection and bounty.

In explaining the influence of the Grecian solemnities, we must not forget the musical and poetical exhibitions, which, from being employed to reward the victors in the gymnastic exercises, came to be themselves thought worthy of reward.

Influence
of the mu-
sical and
poetical
contests.

The martial lessons of Tyrtæus and Callinus admirably conspired with the effects which have already been described, encouraging the firm and manly virtues, both by the enthusiasm with which their precepts were conveyed and by the lively impressions which they gave of those objects for which it is important and honourable to contend. The courage, depending on blood and nerves, is uncertain and transitory in its existence; and even while it exists, may be indifferently employed to purposes beneficial or destructive. It belonged to the martial bards to determine its doubtful nature, to illustrate and enforce its genuine motives, and to direct it unerringly to the proper objects of its pursuit.

The musical entertainments thus promoted, refined, and exalted the manly principles inspired by all the customs and institutions of that warlike age. But as bravery is a hardy plant that grows in every soil, the most beneficial consequence of the arts consisted in infusing a proper mixture of softness and sensibility into the Grecian character. This is well known to be their effect in every country where they have been allowed to flourish.* The Greeks in a peculiar manner, required

They infused a proper mixture of softness and sensibility into the Grecian character.

* *Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.*

their assistance ; nor could it have been possible for that people, without the happy influence of the arts, to control the barbarity naturally occasioned by their constant employment in war, the savage cruelty introduced by the practice of domestic servitude, and that unrelenting ferocity of character

which seems essentially inherent in the nature of democratical government. Amidst these sources of degeneracy and corruption, the time and application necessary to attain proficiency in the pursuits of genius, habituated the Greeks to gentle amusements and innocent pleasures. The honours and rewards bestowed on the successful candidates for literary fame, engaged them to seek happiness and glory in the peaceful shade of retirement, as well as on the contentious theatre of active life ; and the observations and discoveries occasionally suggested by the free communication of sentiment, strengthened and confirmed those salutary maxims which combat on the side of virtue, and maintain the practice of such rules of behaviour as are most useful and agreeable in society.

If the musical and literary entertainments acquired such an happy influence over the moral dispositions of the heart, they produced a still more considerable effect on the intellectual faculties of the mind. It is almost impossible, in the present age, to conceive the full extent of their efficacy in improving the memory, enriching the imagination, and correcting the judgment. As to the memory, indeed, there is a period in the progress of society preceding the introduction of writing, when the energies of this faculty have been exerted among many nations with a wonderful degree of force. Even among the barbarous Celtic inhabitants of our own island, the Druids could repeat an incredible number of verses, containing the knowledge of their history, laws, and religion ; and a period of twenty years was required to complete the poetical studies of a candidate for the priesthood.*

* Cæsar, de bello Gallico, l. vi. cap. 13.

But if the Greeks were equaled by other nations in the power of memory, they have always been unrivaled in the delicacy of their taste, and the inimitable charms of their fancy. These excellences, whether originally produced by natural or moral causes, or more probably by a combination of both, were, doubtless, extended and improved by emulation and habitual exercise. To this exercise the public solemnities afforded a proper field; and, in the contests of music and poetry, were displayed the opening blossoms of Grecian genius, blossoms which afterwards ripened into those fruits of philosophy and eloquence, that will form the admiration and delight of the last ages of the world.

prepared
the Greeks
for their
high attain-
ments in el-
oquence
and philoso-
phy.

CHAP. VII.

State of the Grecian Colonies.—The Ionians flourish in Arts and Arms.—Their wars with the Lydians.—The Asiatic Greeks subdued by Cræsus.—Splendour of the Lydian Court.—Foundation of the Persian Monarchy.—Causes of its rapid Grandeur—Which alarms Cræsus.—His Alliance with the Lacedæmonians.—He invades the Persian Dominions.—Measures of his Allies.—Cræsus defeated by Cyrus.—End of the Lydian Monarchy.

State of the
Greek colo-
nies in Eu-
rope and
Africa.
Olymp.
xx. 1.
A. C. 700.

ABOVE two thousand years have elapsed since it was observed, to the honour of Europe, that a handful of Greeks having established themselves in Asia and Africa, continually maintained and extended their possessions in those quarters of the world.* Wherever the spirit of enterprise diffused their settlements, they perceived, it is said, on the slightest comparison, the superiority of their own religion, language, institutions, and manners; and the dignity of their character and sentiments eminently distinguished them from the general mass of nations whose territories they invaded, and whom they justly denominated Barbarians.† Yet these honourable advantages, instead of conciliating good-will, tended only to exasperate hostility. The northern Greeks were perpetually harassed by the fierce inroads of the Thracians; the southern were endangered by the united strength of Egypt and Lybia. The colonies in Magna Græcia having easily resisted the rude, though warlike natives of that country, were called to contend with the more formidable power of Carthage. But

* Hippocrat. vol. i. p. 350. edit. Lugdun. 1763.

† Isocrat. Panegy. passim.

the consequences of all these wars, which shall be described in due time, extended not beyond the countries in which they first arose. The memorable conflict between the Greek colonies in the East, and the great nations of Asia, forms a subject more vast and more interesting. Not confined to the extremities, it reached and shook the centre of Greece. It recoiled with more destructive violence on Persia; its duration comprehends the most illustrious period in the history of both countries; and its extent embraces all the great nations of antiquity, together with the scattered communities of Grecian extraction in every part of the world.

In the third century after their establishment in the east, and above seven hundred years before the Christian æra, the Greeks of Asia, and particularly the Ionians, far surpassed their European ancestors in splendour and prosperity.* While ancient Greece was harassed by intestine dissensions, and its northern frontier exposed to the hostility of neighbouring Barbarians, the eastern colonies enjoyed profound peace, and flourished in the vicinity of Phrygia and Lydia, the best cultivated and most wealthy provinces of Lower Asia,† and perhaps of the ancient world. History and poetry alike extol the golden treasures of the Phrygian and Lydian kings.‡ Their subjects wrought mines of gold, melted the ore, moulded figures in bronze, dyed wool, cultivated music, enjoyed the amusements of leisure, and indulged the demands of luxury,|| when the neighbouring countries of Cappadocia and Armenia remained equally ignorant of laws and arts, and when the Medes and Persians, destined successively to obtain the empire of Asia, lived in scattered villages, subsisted by hunting, pasturage, or robbery, and were clothed with the skins of wild beasts.§

State of the
Greek colonies
in Asia.

* Herodot. *passim*. Plin. l. v. & Senec. ad Helv.

† Strabo, l. xii. and l. xiii.

‡ Idem. p. 628 & 621. edit. Paris.

|| Herodot. l. i. c. xciv. Plin. l. vi. c. lvi.

§ Herodot. l. i. c. lxxi. Conf. Isocrat. Panathen.

They engross the commerce of Lydia, Phrygia, and Egypt.

Yet the Lydians and Phrygians, satisfied with their domestic advantages, seem never to have directed their attention towards foreign commerce.* When the voluptuousness or ostentation of their kings and nobility made them covet the conveniences and luxuries of distant countries, they were contented to owe these new gratifications, first to the Phœnician merchants, and afterwards to the Greek settlements established on their coasts. Through the supine neglect of their neighbours respecting maritime affairs, the Asiatic Greeks acquired without contest, and enjoyed without molestation, besides several valuable islands, the whole western coast of the continent, extending, in a waving line, about six hundred miles in length, beautifully diversified by hill and dale, intersected by rivers, broken by bays and promontories, and adorned by the noblest prospects and finest climate in the world. The face of that delightful country will be more particularly described, when it becomes the unhappy scene of military operations. It is sufficient at present to observe, that its Ionian inhabitants, possessing the mouths of great rivers, having convenient and capacious harbours before them, and behind, the wealthy and populous nations of Asia, whose commerce they enjoyed and engrossed, attained such early and rapid proficiency in the arts of navigation and traffic, as raised the cities of Miletus,† Colophon,‡ and Phœcea,|| to an extraordinary pitch of opu-

* The Lydians and Phrygians are mentioned, in Castor's Epochs, among the seventeen nations, who, according to that careless and ignorant compiler, successively became masters of the Mediterranean sea; but the extravagant dreams of this fabulous writer are at variance with the whole tenor of ancient history. It is extraordinary that those who ever looked into Herodotus should pay any regard to the unwarranted assertions of Castor; yet this fabulist has been generally followed by modern chronologers and compilers. See BLAIR's Tables, &c.

† Athenæus, l. xii. p. 523. Comparing their ancient and actual state, the Greek proverb said, *Πάλαι ποτε ἦσαν ἀλκιμοὶ Μιλήσιοι*: Once, but long ago, the Milesians were powerful.

‡ Athen. l. xiv. p. 643.

|| Strabo, p. 582. & p. 647. Herodot. l. iv. c. clii.

lence and grandeur. Their population increasing with their prosperity, they diffused new colonies every where around them. Having obtained footing in Egypt,* in the eighth century before Christ, they acquired, and thenceforth preserved, the exclusive commerce of that ancient and powerful kingdom. - Their territories, though in their greatest breadth compréssed between the sea and the dominions of Lydia to the extent of scarce forty miles, became not only flourishing in peace, but formidable in war,† and bore something of a similar relation to the powerful kingdoms of Egypt, Lydia, and Assyria, which had hitherto swayed the politics of the ancient world, that the small but industrious republics of Italy maintained towards the rest of Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: or, to describe their condition still more exactly, that the Netherlands, three hundred years ago, maintained towards the extensive countries of France, England, and Germany.

Such multiplied advantages could not languish in the hands of men, who, as we shall soon learn from their history, had genius to conceive, and courage to execute, the most arduous designs. With the utmost industry and perseverance they improved and ennobled the useful or elegant arts, which they found already exercised among the Phrygians and Lydians. They incorporated the music of those nations with their own. Their poetry, as above described, far excelled whatever Pagan antiquity could boast most precious.‡ They rivaled the skill of their neighbours in moulding clay, and casting brass. They appear to have been the first people who made statues of marble. The Doric and Ionic orders of architecture perpetuate, in their names, the honour of their inventors. Painting was first reduced to rule, and practised with success among the Greeks; and we may be assured that, during the seventh century before Christ the Ionians surpassed all their

Improved
the arts
which they
had learned
in those
countries.

Invent oth-
ers peculiar
to them-
selves.

* Herodot. l. ii. c. cxxxii.

† Idem. *ibid.*, & Aristot. de Civitat. l. iv. c. iv.

‡ See Chap. vi.

neighbours, and even the Phœnicians, in the arts of design, since the magnificent presents which the far-famed oracle of Delphi received from the ostentation or piety of the Lydian kings, were chiefly the productions of Ionian artists.* In the following century Ionia gave birth to Philosophy; and we shall have occasion to explain hereafter by what means both science and taste were diffused from that country over Greece, Italy and Sicily. But our present subject recalls us from the history of arts to that of arms.

Incursion of the Cimmerians. The first formidable enemies with whom the Asiatic Greeks had to contend, were the barbarous Cimmerians,† who, being driven from the banks of

the Euxine, by a Scythian horde still fiercer than themselves, overflowed, with resistless violence, the finest provinces of Asia Minor. But the invasion of the Cimmerians is described as a predatory incursion,‡ not as a regular plan of enterprise directed to the purposes of conquest and settlement. The hurricane

Domestic dissensions. soon spent its force; the Greeks recovered from the terror inspired by these desultory ravagers, and, within a few years after their departure, the Ionian and Eolian colonies, who seem to have carried their ancient enmity into their new acquisitions, totally forgot their recent and common danger, and engaged in cruel domestic wars.

interrupted by the growth of the Lydian power. These unnatural dissensions were repressed by the growing power of the Lydians, which, extending itself on all sides, finally reduced the greatest part of Lesser Asia, a country once affording the materials of many rich and flourishing kingdoms, but now reduced to beggary and barbarism under the oppressive yoke of Turkish tyranny. The territory of

* Herodot. l. i.

† Strabo, p. 292, says, that the Cimmerians were called Cimbri by the Romans. He speaks frequently of them, particularly pp. 108. 193. 292. 494. Their impetuous and destructive incursions are well expressed by the elegiac poet Callinus, cited in Strabo, p. 648.

Νυν δ' ἐπὶ Κιμμερίων στρατός ἐρχεται οὐρμιοεργών.

‡ Οὐ καταστροφή ἐγένετο τῶν πόλεων ἀλλὰ ἐξ ἐπιδρομῆς ἀρπαγῆς.

HERODOT.

Lydia, which extended its name with its authority from the river Halys to the Ægean, and from the southern shore of the Euxine to the northern coast of the Mediterranean, was anciently confined to that delightful district situate at the back of Ionia, watered on the north by the river Pactolus, famous for the golden particles* intermixed with its sand, and on the south by Cayster, whose banks, frequented by swans, have afforded one of the most beautiful comparisons in the Iliad.† The kingdom of Lydia was anciently subject to a race of princes,‡ styled Atyatidæ, from the heroic Atys, the great founder of their house. To the family of Atys succeeded that of Hercules, which had obtained sovereignty in Lydia before the war of Troy, and continued to reign five hundred and five years, till their honours expired in the unhappy Candaules. The story of Candaules, of his beautiful wife, and of his fortunate servant, has been adorned by the father of history with the inimitable charms of his Ionic fancy. The vain, credulous prince, injudiciously displaying the beauty, offended the modesty of his injured spouse. Gyges,|| the most favoured of her husband's attendants, to whom his weak master had prostituted the sight of her naked charms, was involuntarily employed as the instrument of her resentment. To reward him for taking away the life of Candaules, he was honoured with the hand of the queen, and from the rank of captain of the guards, advanced to the throne of Lydia.

This revolution, which happened seven hundred and eighteen years before Christ, was felt by the neighbouring nations, who soon discovered in the enterprising character of Gyges, the difference be-

Gyges
makes war
on the Ioni-
ans.

* They were washed down from Mount Tmolus, the gold of which was exhausted in the time of Strabo. Vid. Strabo, l. xiii.

† *Καυσπίου αμφορείων*, &c. Iliad ii. ver. 460. and Pope, ver. 540.

‡ Herodotus, l. i. throughout, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, l. i. c. 27. & seq. furnish the principle materials for the history of Lydia.

|| Herodotus was unacquainted with the wonderful story of Gyges's ring, which had the power of rendering him invisible, by means of which he was enabled to kill his master, and usurp his throne. Plato, l. ii. de Repub.

tween adventurers who acquire, and princes who inherit, a crown. The Ionian cities of Asia offered a tempting prize to the valour of Gyges, and the valuable mines* discovered between the cities Atarneus and Pergamus, as well as the gold obtained from the river Pactolus,† enabled him to hire such a

Takes Colo-
phon O-
lymp. xxv.
1. A. C.
680.

number of troops as seemed necessary to accomplish his ambitious designs. The citizens of Miletus and Smyrna were harassed by a long war; but of all the Ionic settlements, Colophon alone submitted to his arms.

The war
continued
by his suc-
cessors.
Olymp. xl.
2.
A. C. 619.

Ardys his successor, following the military example of Gyges, stormed the city of Priene, and invaded the territories of the Milesians. He transmitted his enmity against that people to his son Sadyattes, from whom it descended to his more warlike grandson. Alyattes, grandson of Ardys annually invaded the country of Miletus, cut down the trees, burnt the standing corn, ravaged and desolated the whole territory. The houses he allowed to remain entire, that the Milesians, governed by that powerful attachment which binds men to their ancient habitations, might return thither after his departure, and again apply to the sowing and cultivation of the ground, the fruits of which he was determined next harvest to destroy. In this manner he continued, during eleven years, to harass, but was unable to conquer, the Milesians. The inhabitants of the country retired at his approach, and shut themselves up in their capital, the walls of which bid defiance to his assaults; nor was it possible to reduce by blockade a city that had long been, and still continued, mistress of the sea. But Alyattes persisted in distressing those whom it seemed impossible to subdue; and he was carrying on his twelfth autumnal incursion with fire and sword, when an unforeseen accident occasioned, a speedy termination of the war.

* Strabo, l. xiii. p. 625.

† Strabo, p. 680. The wealth of Gyges was proverbial in the time of Anacreon:

Ου μοι μέλει Γυγας
Του Σαρδίων ανακτος, &c.

The beautiful territory of Miletus was, according to annual custom, thrown into a blaze, and the flames of the standing corn, impelled by the violence of the wind, communicated with the temple of Assesian Minerva. That sacred edifice was burnt to the ground. Alyattes, who was attended on his march by pipes, harps, and flutes, adapted to the voice both of men and of women, did not immediately consider, amidst the noise of festivity, and the parade of military triumph, the fatal consequences of this enormous impiety. But falling sick soon after at Sardis, he had leisure during the quiet and solitude of his distemper, to reflect on the horror of his crime; and prying into futurity with that anxious solicitude which usually attends guilt, he despatched messengers to the temple of Delphi, to consult the Grecian god concerning the means of mitigating the distress of his present uneasy state of mind. Apollo refused giving an answer to his petition, unless he should rebuild the temple of Minerva. The Lydian prepared to comply with this condition, and immediately sent ambassadors to Miletus, to propose a suspension of arms until the great work shall be completed. That city was then governed by Thrasybulus, who, by one of those revolutions not unfrequent in the Grecian republics, had attained the rank of tyrant,* as it was then called, in a state usually subsisting under the form of a democratical community. Similarity of views and dispositions had introduced a friendly connexion between Thrasybulus and the celebrated Periander of Corinth, who was no sooner acquainted with the advice of Apollo, than he sent immediate intimation of it to the Milesian prince, counselling him at the same time to avail himself of the present conjuncture to promote the interest of his country. In compliance with this advice,

An unfore-
seen event
puts an end
to the war.
Olymp.
xliii. 2.
A. C. 607.

* In the strict sense *τυραννος* means him who has acquired sovereignty in a free republic. The word has no relation to the abuse of power as in the modern acceptation. Thrasybulus of Miletus, Periander of Corinth, Pisis-tratus of Athens, Polycrates of Samos, Alexander of Pheræ, and Dionysius of Syracuse, were all called *τυραννοί*, though their characters were as widely different as those of Titus and Domitian, the extremes of virtue and vice.

Thrasybulus employed an expedient equally singular and successful. When the Lydian ambassadors arrived at Miletus, they expected to behold a city in distress, not only destitute of the accommodations and luxuries, but ill provided with the chief necessities of life. But their surprise was extreme, to observe vast magazines of corn open to public view, to perceive an extraordinary abundance of all other fruits of the ground: and to behold the inhabitants revelling in fulness and festivity, as if their country had never suffered the cruel ravages of an invader. This appearance of ease and plenty was exhibited by the contrivance of Thrasybulus, by whose command the corn and other provisions had been carried from private magazines into the streets, that the Lydians, returning to Sardis, the usual residence of their prince, might acquaint him with the prosperous condition of a people, whom it had been the great object of his reign to afflict and to annoy. Alyattes was much affected by the intelligence, and at length consented to a peace with the Milesians on honourable terms. To compensate for his past injuries and impiety, he promised to dedicate to Minerva two new edifices, the magnificence of which should far surpass the splendour of her ancient temple. The promise was performed, the new temples were consecrated, Alyattes recovered from his distemper, and peace subsisted for a short time between the two nations.

Happy
reign of
Alyattes.

The long reign of Alyattes, which, if we may credit the doubtful evidence of ancient authors in matters of chronology, lasted fifty-two years after the treaty with Miletus, was not chequered with any great variety of fortune. He conquered, indeed, the city and small territory of Smyrna, a Grecian settlement then in its infancy, but which was destined afterwards to become, by its happy situation for commerce, the most wealthy and populous establishment in those parts, and to be styled, in the pompous language of inscription, the ornament of Ionia, the first and chief city of the Asiatic coast.* His arms were equally successful in repelling the destructive invasions of the Scythian hordes,

* Marm. Oxon.

who ravaged the northern parts of his dominions, and in resisting the dangerous ambition of the Medes, the most powerful nation of Upper Asia. Satisfied with these advantages, Alyattes became unwilling to commit his future fortune to the vicissitudes of war. Fixed in this purpose, he spent his remaining days amidst the happiness of his wealth and grandeur, in contemplating the various stages of his prosperity, in listening to the flattery of his courtiers, in receiving the grateful homage of his subjects, and in enjoying that pomp and pleasure which usually surround an eastern throne.

This fortunate prince was succeeded five hundred and sixty-two years before Christ, by his son Cræsus, whose uninterrupted prosperity, in the first years of his reign, far eclipsed the glory of all his predecessors. But the splendour of Cræsus was that of a passing meteor, which dazzles for a moment, and disappears for ever. Of all the kings of Lydia, he was the greatest conqueror, but he was also the last king of that country,* as well as the last prince of his family. Under various unjust pretences he attacked the Grecian cities of Asia Minor, which being undisturbed by foreign war, had unfortunately engaged in domestic dissensions. While jealousy hindered the Greeks, ignorance prevented the Barbarians, from forming a confederacy sufficient to resist the Lydian power. The Carians, Mysians, and Phrygians, fighting singly, were successively subdued; and the whole peninsula of Lesser Asia (except only the little territory of Lycians and Cicilians,) extending eastward as far as the river Halys, and inhabited by three nations of Grecian, and eleven of Barbarian extraction,† finally acknowledged the power of Cræsus, and tamely received his commands.

The war renewed by Cræsus, Olymp. lib. 3. A. C. 562.

Who subdues the Asiatic Greeks, as well as the neighbouring nations.

Having met with such extraordinary success by land, the Lydian prince determined to render his

He is diverted from his design

* Lydia descended to the rank of a province, as will appear below.

† The Phrygians, Mysians, Mariandynians, Chalybians, Lydians, Paphlagonians, Thracians, Bithynians, Carians, and Pamphylians.

of raising a naval power. power equally conspicuous by sea. For this purpose, he thought seriously of equipping a fleet, with which he purposed to invade and conquer the Grecian islands directly fronting his dominions. But this design, which, considering the slow progress in maritime power among the nations most diligent to attain it, would probably have failed of success, was prevented by the advice of a philosophical traveller, conveyed in such a lively turn of wit, as easily changed the resolution of the king. Bias of Priène, in Ionia, some say Pittacus of Mitylenè, in the isle of Lesbos, while he travelled, after the Grecian custom, from curiosity and a love of knowledge, was presented to Cræsus at the Lydian court; and being asked by that prince what news from Greece? he answered with a republican freedom that the islanders had collected powerful squadrons of cavalry, with an intention of invading Lydia. "May the gods grant," said Cræsus, "that the Greeks, who are unacquainted with horsemanship, should attack the disciplined valour of the Lydian cavalry; there would soon be an end to the contest." "In the same manner," replied Bias, "as if the Lydians, who are totally unexperienced in naval affairs, should invade the Grecians by sea." Struck by the acuteness of this unexpected observation, Cræsus desisted from his intended expedition against the islands; and instead of employing new means for extending his conquests, determined peaceably to enjoy the laurels which he had won, and to display the grandeur which he had attained.

The splendour of Cræsus' court. His court was the gayest and most splendid of any in that age; and the Asiatic Greeks, whatever dishonour they incurred, sustained not, perhaps, any real loss by their easy submission to a vain and weak man, but a magnificent and liberal prince,* who was extreme-

* Such is the character which results from considering the conduct of Cræsus. The transactions of his reign will not warrant our adopting the admirable panegyric of him by Pindar, (Pyth. i.)

Ου φθίνει Κροίσου φιλοφρων ἀρετή, &c.
He was taught wisdom late, and only by adversity.

ly partial to their country. They acknowledged the conqueror, indeed, by a very moderate tribute, but they enjoyed their ancient laws, and administered without control, their domestic concerns and government.* Cræsus spoke their language, encouraged their arts, admired their poets and *sophists*. Ionia, perhaps, was† never more happy than under the eye of this indulgent master, whose protection nourished the tender shoot of philosophy, which had begun to spring up shortly before his reign. Thales of Miletus, Pittacus of Mitylenè, Bias of Brienè, Cleobulus of Lindus, and the other wise men, as they are emphatically styled, who lived in that age, not only gave advice and assistance to their countrymen in particular emergencies, but corrected their vices through wholesome laws, improved their manners by useful lessons of morality, and extended their knowledge by important and difficult discoveries. We shall have occasion hereafter to consider more fully the improvements made by those ancient sages, who are said to have maintained a correspondence with each other, as well as with Chilon of Sparta, Periander of Corinth, and Solon of Athens, men who acquired such reputation by their practical wisdom, as rendered them the oracles of their respective countries. Most of these, as well as Æsop the fabulist, and the elegant Greek poets of the times were bountifully received at the court of Cræsus. There is still on record a memorable conversation between that prince and Solon, which seemed to predict the subsequent events of his reign, and which had a late, but important influence on the character and fortune of the Lydian king.

Condition
of the Asia-
tic Greeks
under his
govern-
ment.

Cræsus having entertained his Athenian guest, according to the ancient fashion, for several days, before he asked him any questions, ostentatiously showed him the magnificence of his palace, and particularly the riches of his treasury. After all had been displayed to the best advantage, the king complimented Solon upon his curiosi-

His conver-
sation with
Solon.

* Herodot.

† Thucydid.

ty and love of knowledge; and asked him, as a man who had seen many countries, and reflected patiently and acutely upon what he had seen, whom of all men he esteemed most happy? By the particular occasion, as well as the triumphant air with which the question was proposed, the king made it evident that he expected flattery rather than information. But Solon's character had not been enervated by the debilitating air of a court, and he replied with a manly freedom, "Tellus, the Athenian." Cræsus, who had scarcely learned to distinguish, even in imagination, between wealth and happiness, inquired with a tone of surprise, why this preference to Tellus? "Tellus," rejoined Solon, "was not conspicuous for his riches, or his grandeur, being only a simple citizen of Athens; but he was descended from parents who deserved the first honours of the republic. He was equally fortunate in his children, who obtained universal esteem by their probity, patriotism, and every useful quality of the mind or body; and as to himself, he died fighting gallantly in the service of his country, which his valour rendered victorious in a doubtful combat; on which account the Athenians buried him on the spot where he fell, and distinguished him by every honour which public gratitude can confer on illustrious merit."

Cræsus had little encouragement, after this answer, to ask Solon, in the second place, whom, next to Tellus, he deemed most happy? Such, however, is the illusion of vanity, that he still ventured to make this demand, and still, as we are informed by the most circumstantial of historians, entertained hopes of being favourably answered. But Solon replied with the same freedom as before, "The brothers Cleobis and Biton; two youths of Argos, whose strength and address were crowned with repeated victory at the Olympic games; who deserved the affection of their parents, the gratitude of their country, the admiration of Greece; and who, having ended their lives with peculiar felicity,* were commemorated by the most signal monuments of immortal fame." "And is the happiness of

* Τελουτη του θωα αριση επιγενετο. Herodot. l. i. c. 31.

a king, then," said Cræsus, "so little regarded, O Grecian stranger! that you prefer to it the mean condition of an Athenian or Argive citizen?" The reply of Solon justified his reputation for wisdom. "The life of man," said he, "consists of seventy years, which make twenty-six thousand two hundred and fifty days; an immense number, yet in the longest life, the events of any one day will not be found exactly alike to those of another. The affairs of men are liable to perpetual vicissitudes; the Divinity who presides over our fate is envious of unvaried prosperity; and all human life, if not condemned to calamity, is at least liable to accident.* Whoever has uninterruptedly enjoyed a prosperous tide of success may justly be called fortunate; but he cannot before his death be entitled to the epithet of happy."

The events which soon followed this conversation, Cræsus affected by the loss of his son Atys. prove how little satisfaction is derived from the possession of a throne. Victorious in war, unrivalled in wealth, supreme in power, Cræsus felt and acknowledged his unhappiness. The warmest affections of his soul centred in his son Atys, a youth of the most promising hopes, who had often fought and conquered by his side. The strength of his attachment was accompanied with an excess of paternal care, and the anxiety of his waking hours disturbed the tranquillity of his rest. He dreamed that his beloved son was slain by a dart; and the solicitude with which he watched his safety, preventing the youth from his usual occupations and amusements, and thereby rendering him too eager to enjoy them, most probably exposed him to the much-dreaded misfortune. Reluctantly permitted to engage in a party of hunting, the juvenile ardour of Atys, increased by the impatience of long restraint, made him neglect the precautions necessary in that manly amusement. He was slain by a dart, aimed at a wild boar of monstrous size, which had long spread terror over the country of the Mysians. The weapon came from

* *Ὅτεν ὡς ἡ Κροῖσος πᾶς ἐστὶ ἀνθρώπος συμφορῇ.* The last word is improperly explained in all the translations that I have met with.

the hand of Adrastus, a Phrygian prince and fugitive, whom Cræsus had purified from the involuntary guilt of a brother's blood, and long distinguished by peculiar marks of bounty. To the grateful protection of the Phrygian, Cræsus recommended, at parting, the safety of his beloved son. A mournful procession of Lydians brought to Sardis the dead body of Atys. The ill-fated murderer followed behind. When they approached the royal presence, Adrastus stepped forward, and intreated Cræsus to put him to death; thinking life no longer to be endured after killing first his own brother, and then the son of his benefactor. But the Lydian king, notwithstanding the excess of his affliction, acknowledged the innocence of Adrastus, and the power of fate. "Stranger, your action is blameless, being committed without design. I know that my son was destined to a premature death." Adrastus, though pardoned by Cræsus, could not pardon himself. When the mourners were removed, he privately returned, and perished by his own hand on the tomb of Atys.

Roused from his inactivity by the growing power of Persia. Two years Cræsus remained disconsolate for the loss of his son, and might have continued to indulge his unavailing affliction during the remainder of life, had not the growing greatness of Persia, which threatened the safety of his dominions roused him from his dream of misery. That country was anciently confined to a small part of the immense region at present known by the Persian name. Its inhabitants had recently become formidable, and in the course of a few years under Agradatus, afterwards called Cyrus,* they extended their conquests over Upper Asia, overturned the power of Cræsus, enslaved the Greeks of Asia Minor, and, for the first time, threatened Europe with the terrors of Asiatic despotism. This memorable revolution deserves not only to be examined in its consequences, but traced to its source, because the Grecian wars and transactions, during the space of above two centuries, with the Persian empire, form an important object of attention in the present history.

* Strabo, l. xv. p. 729.

The first Assyrian monarchy held dominion in Upper Asia, from the northern deserts of Scythia, to the Southern or Indian Ocean. On the west it was separated by the river Malys from the dominions of Lydia. The river Indus formed its eastern boundary.* The conquerors of the East have assumed, in all ages, the title of King of Kings; a title expressive of the nature, as well as of the greatness of their power. The various provinces which they conquered, though acknowledging their universal dependence on the emperor, were yet subject to their particular princes, who, while they paid their appointed tribute during peace, and furnished their contingent of troops in time of war, were permitted, in their ancient territories, to retain their power, and to display the pomp of royalty. This system of government is more favourable to the extension than to the permanence of empire. The different members of this unwieldy body were so feebly connected with each other, that to secure their united submission required almost as much genius as to achieve their conquest. When the spirit which animated the immense mass was withdrawn, the different parts fell asunder; revolutions were no less rapid than frequent; and, by one of those events familiar in the history of the East, the warlike sceptre of Ninus and Semiramis was wrested from the effeminate hands of Sardapalus. In the year seven hundred and forty-six before Christ, the provincial governors of Babylonia and Media, disdaining to receive orders from this enervated shadow of their ancient lords, rejected his contemptible authority, and established two new dynasties, which, having governed Asia for two centuries, were again reunited by the fortunate valour of Cyrus.

The revolutions in Upper Asia, till the establishment of the Persian empire.

This extraordinary man, who raised the Persian glory on the ruins of the Modes and Babylonians, was the son of Cambyses, the tributary prince of Persia: on the mother's side he derived a more honourable descent from Mandana, daughter of Astyages, the supreme lord of Media, and

† I speak according to received accounts; a critical and consistent history of Assyria is attempted in my history of the world, &c. sect. ii.

many kingdoms of the East. The powerful monarchy erected by Cyrus was distinguished by the name of his native province, as the preceding empires had been denominated after the provinces of their respective conquerors, although all of them, comprehending the same nations, were bounded by nearly the same limits, Cyrus alone having extended his empire to the Grecian sea.

Description of Persia. The territory of Persia, to the name of which we allude, is situate on the southern frontiers of Media, and reaches to the Persian gulf. The mountainous nature of the country renders it improper for cavalry, but it formerly produced a bold and hardy race of men, who, uncorrupted by the effeminacy of the Asiatic plains, required only the directing genius of a commander to conduct them to war and victory. Such a commander they found in Cyrus, whose mind, bursting through the shackles imposed on virtues and abilities by the manners and climate of the East,* extended the name and conquests of Persia from the Tigris to the Indus, and from the Caspian sea to the ocean; a name which, after the revolution of so many ages and empires, is still retained by that spacious region of the earth.

The early institutions of that country embellished by ancient historians. As it is natural to account, by extraordinary causes, for extraordinary events, historians have ascribed institutions and customs to the Persians worthy of rendering them the masters of the world. The philosophical Xenophon, embellishing with wonderful art the most admired, and the most admirable, branches of Grecian discipline, has bestowed them with too lavish a generosity on the founders of a nation who became the unrelenting enemies of his country. But, notwithstanding all the refinements of his ingenious and well-cultivated invention, it is not impossible to see through the laboured artifice of the disguise; and as truth only is consistent, we may discern very material contradictions in the only remaining accounts of the ancient manners of the Persians.

* See his panegyric in Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, and in *Æschylus's Persæ*.

Their early education consisted, if we may credit both Xenophon and Herodotus, in learning to manage the horse, to shoot with the bow, and to speak truth. Yet it is necessary to observe that the first of those arts, how well soever it might be understood in later times by the Persian nobility, must have been very little known to their ancestors in the time of Cyrus. The craggy mountains which they inhabited were unfavourable to the rearing of horses, and the poverty of their circumstances was ill adapted to maintain them. While all the other nations of Upper Asia, except some tribes of Scythians, fought on horseback, the Persian armies were composed chiefly of infantry: and when we consider the tremendous energies of the phalanx under Philip and Alexander, and that the Romans under the republic, as well as the northern barbarians who overran and subdued the countries of the east and west, became masters of the world chiefly through the firm intrepidity of their infantry, there is reason to assign, as the main cause of the Persian conquests, not their acquaintance with horsemanship, but rather their ignorance of that art, which obliged them to employ the determined valour of foot soldiers against the desultory assaults of horsemen. The Persians were commonly armed with swords and lances, instead of bows and darts, the usual weapons of the people of Asia. This distinction was occasioned by their want of cavalry. While their neighbours, trusting to the mettle and swiftness of their steeds, employed the harmless efforts of distant hostility, the Persians fought hand to hand, each man buckling closely to his foe. If defeated, they had no means of escape; but it was not to be expected that, practising such a superior style of war, under the conduct of an accomplished general, they should ever meet with a defeat; and indeed Cyrus always proved victorious over the civilized nations of Asia; nor was the career of his triumph interrupted, till contending against the barbarous Scythians, who joined the Persian arms and discipline to their own resistless fury, he lost at once his army and his life.*

* In the history of Cyrus, the plain relation of Herodotus is to be prefer-

The reign
of Cyrus.
A. C. 559—
529. His
first con-
quests:

But before experiencing this fatal reverse of fortune, he was destined, in the course of thirty years, to act a distinguished part on the theatre of the world, which long retained the marks, and will always preserve the memory, of his reign. Among the first conquests of Cyrus were the territories of Armenia and Chaldea, which had openly revolted against established authority. If we believe Xenophon, Cyrus was sent against those rebellious countries as the lieutenant of his grandfather Astyages, who from his palace in Ecbatan diffused his sovereign mandates over many provinces of Upper Asia. The relation of Herodotus makes it probable that Cyrus had before this time assumed the government of Media, over which the cruelty, injustice, and superstitious fears of Astyages, rendered him unworthy to reign, even in the opinion of his most trusty subjects.

Which a-
larm Cræ-
sus. Olymp.
lvi. 4.
A. C. 549.

However that may be, (for it affects not the design of the present narrative,) it was natural to expect that the Persian success in Armenia, a province situated so near to the Lydian dominions, should alarm the fears of Cræsus, and determine that prince to resist the encroachments of a power which endangered the permanence of his own. In taking this resolution, which might probably be attended with the most important consequences, he was desirous to learn the will of heaven concerning the issue of the war. The principal oracles which he consulted were those of Branchis in Ionia, of Hammon in Lybia, and of Delphi

Cræsus con-
sults the or-
acle of Del-
phi.

in Greece. Among these respected shrines, the oracle of Delphi maintained its ascendant, as the most faithful interpreter of fate. Cræsus was fully persuaded of its veracity; and desirous generously to compensate for the trouble which he had already given, and still meant to give, the priests of Apollo, he sacrificed three thousand oxen to the god, and adorned his shrine with dedications, equally valuable for the workmanship and for the mate-

red to the moral embellishments of Xenophon, except when the accounts of the latter are confirmed by the authority of Scripture.

rials; precious vessels of silver, ewers of iron beautifully inlaid and enamelled; various ornaments of pure gold, particularly a golden lion, weighing ten talents, and a female figure, three cubits, or near five feet high. In return for these magnificent presents, the oracle, in ambiguous language, flattered Cræsus with the hope of obtaining an easy victory over his enemies, and enjoying a long life and a prosperous reign. The god at the same enjoined him to contract an alliance with the most powerful of the Grecian states.

Elated with these favourable predictions of Apollo, Cræsus prepared to yield a ready obedience to the only condition required on his part for the accomplishment of his aspiring purpose. Not deeming himself sufficiently acquainted with the affairs of Greece, to know what particular republic was meant

Enters into an alliance with the Lacedæmonians. Olymp. lvi. 1. A. C. 548.

by the oracle, he made particular inquiry of those best informed concerning the state of Europe, and discovered, that among all the members of the Grecian confederacy, the Athenians and Lacedæmonians were justly entitled to the pre-eminence. In order to learn which of these communities deserved the epithet of most powerful, it was necessary to send ambassadors into Greece. The Lydians, despatched with this important commission, soon discovered that the Athenians, after having been recently much harassed by internal dissensions, were actually governed by the tyrant Pisistratus. The Spartans, on the other hand, though anciently the worst-regulated of all the Grecian communities, had enjoyed domestic peace, and foreign prosperity, ever since their adoption of the wise institutions of Lycurgus. After that memorable period, they had repeatedly conquered the warlike Argives, triumphed over the hardy Arcadians, and notwithstanding the heroic exploits of Aristomenes, subdued and enslaved their unfortunate rivals of Messenê. To the Lydian ambassadors, therefore, the Spartan republic appeared to be pointed out by the oracle, as the community whose alliance they were enjoined to solicit. Having repaired accordingly to Sparta, they were introduced not only to

the kings and senate, but, as the importance of the negotiation required, to the general assembly of the Lacedæmonians, to whom they, in few words, declared the object of their commission: "We are sent, O Lacedæmonians! by Cræsus, king of the Lydians and of many other nations, who being commanded by the oracle of Apollo to seek the friendship of the most powerful people of Greece, now summons you, who justly merit that epithet, to become his faithful allies, in obedience to the will of the god whose authority you acknowledge." The Lacedæmonians, pleased with the alliance of a warlike king, and still more with the far spread renown of their valour, readily accepted the proposal. To the strict connexion of an offensive and defensive league, they joined the more respected ties of sacred hospitality. A few years before this transaction, they had sent to purchase gold at Sardis, for making a statue of Apollo. Cræsus had on that occasion gratuitously supplied their want. Remembering this generosity, they gave the Lydian ambassadors, at their departure, as a present for their master, a vessel of brass, containing three hundred amphoras, (above twelve hogsheads,) and beautifully carved on the outside with various forms of animals.

His flattering prospects.

Cræsus, having thus happily accomplished the design recommended by the oracle, was eager to set out upon his intended expedition. He had formerly entered into alliance with Amasis king of Egypt, and Labyne-tus king of Babylon. He had now obtained the friendship of the most warlike nation of Europe. The newly raised power of Cyrus and the Persians seemed incapable of resisting such a formidable confederacy.

He invades the Persian territories. Olymp. lviii. 1. A. C. 548.

Elated with these flattering ideas of his own invincible greatness, Cræsus waited not to attack the Persian dominions until he had collected the strength of his allies. The sanguine impetuosity of his temper, unexperienced in adversity, unfortunately precipitated him into measures no less ruinous than daring. Supported only by the arms of Lydia, and a numerous band of mercenaries, whom his immense wealth enabled

him at any time to call into his service, he marched towards the river Halys, and having crossed, with much difficulty, that deep and broad stream, entered the province of Cappadocia, which formed the western frontier of the Median dominions. That unfortunate country soon experienced all the calamities of invasion. The Pterian plain, the most beautiful and most fertile district of Cappadocia, was laid waste; the ports of the Euxine, as well as several inland cities, were plundered; and the inoffensive inhabitants were either put to the sword, or dragged into captivity. Encouraged by the unresisting softness of the natives of those parts, Cræsus was eager to push forwards; and if Cyrus did not previously meet him in the field, he had determined to proceed in triumph to the mountains of Persia. Against this dangerous resolution he was in vain exhorted by a Lydian, named Sandanis, who, when asked his opinion of the war, declared it with that freedom which the princes of the East have in every age permitted, amidst all the pride and caprices of despotic power, to men distinguished by the gifts of nature or education. "You are preparing, O King, to march against a people who lead a laborious and miserable life; whose daily subsistence is often denied them, and is always scanty and precarious; who drink only water, and who are clothed with the skins of wild beasts. What can the Lydians gain by the conquest of Persia; they who enjoy all the advantages of which the Persians are destitute? For my part, I deem it a blessing of the gods, that they have not excited the warlike poverty of these miserable Barbarians to invade and plunder the luxurious wealth of Lydia."* The moderation of this advice was rejected by the fatal presumption of Cræsus, who confounding the dictates of experienced wisdom with the mean suggestions of pusillanimity, dismissed the counsellor with contempt.

Meanwhile, the approach of Cyrus, who was not
of a temper to permit his dominions to be ravaged
with impunity, afforded the Lydian king an oppor-
Is defeated by Cyrus in Cappadocia.

* Herodot. l. i. c. lxxi.

tunity of bringing the war to a more speedy issue than by his intended expedition into Persia. The army of Cyrus gradually augmented on his march, the tributary princes cheerfully contributing with their united strength towards the assistance of a master whose valour and generosity they admired, and who now took arms to protect the safety of his subjects, as well as to uphold the grandeur of his throne. Such was the rapidity of his movement, especially after being informed of the destructive ravages of the enemy in Cappadocia, that he arrived from the shores of the Caspian to those of the Euxine Sea, before the army of Cræsus had provided the necessaries for their march. That prince, when apprised of the neighbourhood of the Persians, encamped on the Pterian plain; Cyrus likewise encamped at no great distance; frequent skirmishes happened between the light troops, and at length a general engagement was fought with equal fury and perseverance, and only terminated by the darkness of night. The loss on both sides hindered a renewal of the battle. The numbers, as well as the courage of the Persians, much exceeded the expectation of Cræsus. As they discovered not any intention to harass his retreat, he determined to move back towards Sardis, to spend the winter in the amusements of his palace, and after summoning his numerous allies to his standard, to take the field early in the spring, with such an increase of force as seemed sufficient to overpower the Persians.*

The prudent conduct of Cyrus.

But this design was defeated by the careful vigilance of Cyrus. That experienced leader allowed the enemy to retire without molestation; carefully informing himself of every step which they took, and of every measure which they seemed determined to pursue. Patiently watching the opportunity of a just revenge, he waited until Cræsus had re-entered his capital, and had disbanded the foreign mercenaries, who composed the most numerous division of his army. It then seemed the proper time for Cyrus to put

* Herodot. l. i. c. lxxvii.

his Persians in motion; and such was his celerity, that he brought the first news of his own arrival in the plain of Sardis.* Crœsus, whose firmness might well have been shaken by the imminence of this unforeseen danger, was not wanting, on the present occasion, to the duties which he owed to his own fame, and the lustre of the Lydian throne. Though his mercenaries were disbanded, his own subjects, who served him from attachment, who had been long accustomed to victory, and who were animated with a high sense of national honour, burned with the desire of enjoying an opportunity to check the daring insolence of the invaders. Crœsus indulged and encouraged this generous ardour. The Lydians, in that age, fought on horseback, armed with long spears; the strength of the Persians consisted in infantry. They were so little accustomed to the use of horses, that camels were almost the only animals which they employed as beasts of burden. This circumstance suggested to a Mede, by name Harpagus, a stratagem, which, being communicated to Cyrus, was immediately adopted with approbation by that prince.† Harpagus, having observed that horses had a strong aversion to the shape and smell of camels, advised the Persian army to be drawn up in the following order. All the camels, which had been employed to carry baggage and provisions, were collected into one body, arranged in a long line fronting the Lydian cavalry: the foot soldiers of the Persians were posted immediately behind the line, and placed at a due distance: the Median horse (for a few squadrons of these followed the standard of Cyrus) formed the rear of the army. As the troops on both sides approached to join battle, the Lydian cavalry, terrified at the unusual appearance of the camels, mounted with men in arms, were thrown into disorder, and turning their heads, endeavoured to escape from the field. Crœsus, who perceived the confusion, was ready to despair of his fortune; but the Lydians, aban-

Defeats
Crœsus in
the plain of
Sardis.

* *Αυτός αγγελος Κροίσω εληλυθεε.* "He came his own messenger to Crœsus."

† Herodot. l. i. c. lxxx.

doning their horses, prepared with uncommon bravery to attack the enemy on foot. Their courage deserved a better fate ;

Croesus
shuts him-
self up in
that city,
and craves
assistance
from his
Spartan
allies.

but unaccustomed as they were to this mode of fighting, they were received and repelled by the experienced valour of the Persian infantry, and obliged to take refuge within the fortified strength of Sardis, where they imagined themselves secure. The walls of that city bid defiance to the rude art of attack, as then practised by the most warlike nations. If the Persian army should invest it, the Lydians were provided with magazines containing provisions for several years ; and there was reason to expect, that in a few months, and even weeks, they would receive such assistance from Egypt, Babylonia, and Greece (to which countries they had already sent ambassadors,) as would oblige the Persians to raise the siege.*

State of
Sparta at
that time.

The Lydian ministers despatched into Greece met with great sympathy from the Spartans. That people were particularly observant of the faith of treaties ; and while they punished their enemies with unexampled severity, they behaved with generous compassion towards those whom they had once accepted for allies. The benevolent principles of their nature were actually warmed and elevated by the triumph of a successful expedition against the most formidable of their domestic foes. They had maintained a long and bloody war with the Argives, for the small, but valuable district of Thyrea, lying on the frontiers of the rival states. The Spartans at length obtained possession of it ; but the Argives advanced with an army more powerful than any that they had ever led into the field, in order to make good their ancient pretensions. The wars of the Greeks were not merely undertaken from the dictates of interest and ambition, but considered as trials of skill, and contests of honour. When a conference, therefore, was proposed, we know not by which of the parties, it was agreed, in order to prevent a greater effusion

* Herodot. l. i. c. lxxx.

of blood, that three hundred combatants on the Spartan, and an equal number on the Argive side, should determine, by the success of their arms, the disputed title to Thyrea, as well as the warlike pre-eminence of their respective republics. Three hundred champions being selected for this purpose from either army, it seemed necessary that the remainder of both nations should retire; for the Argive and Spartan citizens, who felt with a republican sensibility for the interest of their communities, could not have remained tame spectators of the battle. The combatants fought with an obstinate valour, of which there are few examples in history. Each soldier behaved as if the success of the day had been committed to his single spear; and each was eager to sacrifice his own life to the preservation of his country's fame. These generous sentiments were fully proved by the issue of the battle. At the approach of night only three combatants survived, two Argives, and the Spartan Othryades. The Argives, either through neglect or pity, spared the life of their single opponent, and returned home with the melancholy tidings of their bloody victory. Othryades still kept the field, collecting the spoil, and carrying into his own camp the arms of the enemy, which he erected into the usual trophy of military success. Next day the two armies, consisting of a great proportion of the citizens capable of bearing arms, arrived at the scene of action. The surprise of the Argives is not to be expressed, when they beheld the appearance of the field. Notwithstanding the Spartan trophy, they still insisted, that as *two* of their champions, and only one of the enemy's, had survived, they were justly entitled to the glory of the day; but, seemingly with more reason, the Spartans maintained that this honour belonged to Othryades. From verbal altercation, carried on with that warmth which the importance of the dispute naturally inspired, they made an easy transition to acts of violence.* The conflict was long, fierce and bloody; but the superior discipline of Sparta finally prevailed. The Argives lamented their

* Herodot. l. i. c. lxxxii.

defeat, as the greatest calamity that had ever befallen them. The inward feelings of their hearts were expressed by external demonstrations of sorrow. Like most of the Grecian nations, they had hitherto adorned their long hair, to increase the gracefulness of manly beauty, and to render their appearance more terrible to their enemies. But in remembrance of this disaster, they shaved their heads,* deprived the Argive women of their golden ornaments, and bound themselves by a dreadful imprecation that neither should resume their wonted finery, until they had recovered possession of Thyrea. The Spartans, on the other hand, celebrated their victory with the liveliest expressions of national triumph. Othryades alone partook not the general joy. Ashamed of returning to Sparta a solitary monument of three hundred brave men, he, with a generous despair, sacrificed his own life to the manes of his warlike companions. Such were the circumstances of the Lacedæmonian republic, when the ambassadors of Cræsus came to demand their assistance. The prosperity of their own situation naturally heightened, by contrast, the melancholy condition of their unfortunate ally, besieged, as they learned, in his capital, by a victorious army. They immediately resolved to send him a speedy and effectual relief; and for this purpose assembled their troops, made ready their vessels, and prepared every thing necessary for the expedition.

Sardis
taken by
the Per-
sians.

The valour of the Spartans might perhaps have upheld the sinking empire of Lydia, but before their armament could set sail, Cræsus was no longer a

* At funerals, the Greeks cut off their hair, to be consumed in the funeral pile with the bodies of their friends. Thus, at the interment of Patroclus, Achilles

Στας ἀπανενθε πυρὴς ξανθὴν ἀπέκειρατο χαίτην
Τὴν ὅα Σπέρχειω ποταμῷ τρέφε τηλεθώσαν.

In the *Orestes* of Euripides, Helen is blamed for sparing her locks, and cutting off only the ends. "She is," says Electra, "ἡ παλαιὴ γυνή, the same coquette as ever." Lysias, speaking of a great national calamity, says metaphorically, "It becomes Greece to shave her head." Lysias, *Orat. Funeb.* The Argives, as a community realized the metaphor.

sovereign. Notwithstanding the strength of Sardis, Olymp. lvi. A. C. 548. that city had been taken by storm, on the twentieth day of the siege; the walls having been scaled in a quarter, which, appearing altogether inaccessible, was too carelessly guarded. This was effected by the enterprise of Hyreades a Mede, who accidentally observed a sentinel descend part of the rock in order to recover his helmet. Hyreades was a native of the mountainous province of Mardia, and being accustomed to clamber over the dangerous precipices of his native country, resolved to try his activity in passing the rock upon which he had discovered the Lydian. The design was more easily accomplished than he had reason to expect; emulation and success encouraged the bravest of the Persians to follow his example; these were supported by greater numbers of their countrymen; the garrison of Sardis was surprised; the citadel stormed; and the rich capital of Lower Asia subjected to the vengeful rapacity of an indignant victor.*

The Persians were accustomed, like other nations of the ancient world, to exercise the rights of conquest without respecting the laws of humanity. Though they fought, and conquered, and plundered, only for the benefit of their prince, whose slaves and property they themselves were, yet in the first emotions of military success they discovered all the eagerness of avarice, and all the fury of resentment; acting as if they had been called to punish, not the enemies of their king, but their own personal foes; and as if each man had been entitled to reap the full fruits of his rapacious cruelty.

The Lydian prince, delivered, as we are told, by an extraordinary accident from the blind rage of the soldiery,† seemed to be reserved for a harder fate. Dragged into the presence of his conqueror,

Ungenerous treatment of Cæsus.

* Herodot. l. i. c. lxxxiv.

† Herodot. p. 36. Cæsus had a dumb son, who seeing a Persian rush against his father whose misfortunes had rendered him careless of life, first spoke on this occasion: *Ανθρώποις μη πτείνει Κροίσον*. The learned in physiology will decide, whether certain impediments of speech may sometimes be conquered by the impetuous violence of a bursting passion.

he was loaded with irons: and the stern, unrelenting Cyrus, of whose humane temper of mind, we have so beautiful, but so flattering a picture in the philosophical romance of Xenophon, ordered him with the melancholy train of his Lydian attendants to be committed to the flames. An immense pile of wood and other combustibles were erected in the most spacious part of the city. The miserable victims, bound hand and foot, were placed on the top of the pyre. Cyrus, surrounded by his generals, witnessed the dreadful spectacle, either from an abominable principle of superstition, if he had bound himself by a vow to sacrifice Cræsus as the first fruits of his Lydian victory, or from a motive of curiosity, equally cruel and impious, to try whether Cræsus, who had so magnificently adorned the temples, and enriched the ministers of the gods, would be helped in time of need by the miraculous interposition of his much honoured protectors.*

Meanwhile the unfortunate Lydian, oppressed and confounded by the intolerable weight of his present calamity, compared with the security and splendour of his former state, recollected his memorable conversation with the Athenian sage, and uttered with a deep groan, the name of Solon. Cyrus asked by an interpreter, "Whose name he invoked?" "*His*," replied Cræsus, emboldened by the prospect of certain death, "whose words ought ever to speak to the heart of kings." This reply not being satisfactory, he was commanded to explain at full length, the subject of his thoughts. Accordingly he related the important discourse which had passed between himself and the Athenian, of which it was the great moral that no man could be called happy till his death.†

Cyrus receives him into favour. The words of a dying man are fitted to make a strong impression on the heart. Those of Cræsus deeply affected the mind of Cyrus. The Persian considered the speech of Solon, as addressed to himself. He repented of his intended cruelty towards a fallen prince, who had formerly enjoyed all the pomp of prosperity: and dread-

* Herodot. l. i. c. lxxvi.

† See above, p. 226.

ing the concealed vengeance that might lurk in the bosom of fate, gave orders that the pyre should be extinguished. But the workmen who had been employed to prepare it, had performed their task with so much care, that the order could not speedily be obeyed. At that moment, Cræsus calling on Apollo, whose favourite shrine of Delphi had experienced his generous munificence, and whose perfidious oracle had made him so ungrateful a return, the god, it is said, sent a plentiful shower to extinguish the pyre. This event, which saved the life, and which sufficiently attested the piety of Cræsus, strongly recommended him to the credulity of his conqueror. It seemed impossible to pay too much respect to a man who was evidently the favourite of heaven. Cyrus gave orders that he should be seated by his side, and thenceforth treated as a king; a revolution of fortune equally sudden and unexpected. But the mind of Cræsus had undergone a still more important revolution; for, tutored in the useful school of adversity, he learned to think with patience, and to act with prudence; to govern his own passions by the dictates of reason, and to repay by wholesome advice the generous behaviour of his Persian master.*

The first advantage which he derived from the ^{Cræsus re-}change in Cyrus' disposition towards him, was the ^{proaches} the oracle permission of sending his fetters to the temple of ^{of Delphi,} Delphian Apollo, whose flattering oracles had encouraged him to wage war with the Persians. "Behold," were his messengers instructed to say, "the trophies of our promised success! behold the monuments of the unerring veracity of the god!" The Pythia heard their reproach with a smile of contemptuous indignation, and answered it with that solemn gravity which she was so carefully taught to assume: "The gods themselves cannot avoid their *own* destiny, much less avert, however they may retard, the determined fates of men. Cræsus had suffered, and justly suffered, for the crimes of his ancestor Gyges, who entrusted, as chief of the guards, with

* Herodot. l. i. c. lxxxix.

the person of Candaulus, the last king of the race of Hercules, was seduced by an impious woman to murder his master, to defile his bed, and to usurp his royal dignity. For this complicated guilt of Gyges the misfortunes of Cræsus have atoned; but know, that, through the favour of Apollo, these misfortunes have happened three years later than the fates or whose pre- dained."* The Pythia then proceeded to explain
 dictions are her answers concerning the event of the war, against
 explained Cyrus, and proved, to the conviction of the Lydians,
 to his satis- faction. that her words, if properly understood, portended
 the destruction, not of the Persian, but of the Lydian empire. Cræsus heard with resignation the report of his messengers, and acknowledged the justice of the Delphian oracle, which maintained and increased the lustre of its ancient fame.

* Herodot. l. i. c. xci. and seq.

CHAP. VIII.

Cyrus threatens the Asiatic Colonies.—Their Measures.—The Spartans remonstrate against his design.—Conquests of Harpagus.—Migrations of the vanquished Greeks.—Cyrus takes Babylon.—Cambyses subdues Egypt.—Receives Tribute from the African Greeks.—Reign of Darius.—Final Settlement of the Persian Empire.—Degeneracy of Manners.—Revolt of Ionia.—State of Greece.—The Ionian Revolt abetted by the Athenians and Eretrians—who burn Sardis.—The Asiatic Greeks defeated by Sea and Land.—Their condition under the Persian Government.

DURING the reign of Cræsus, and his four war-like predecessors, the Asiatic Greeks sometimes enjoyed their favourite form of republican government, sometimes submitted to domestic tyrants, alternately recovered and lost their national independence. The success of the ambitious Cyrus was not likely to improve the condition of the Ionians, who, during the dependence of his fortune, had repeatedly neglected opportunities to deserve his gratitude. Before invading Lower Asia, he earnestly entreated them to share the glory of his arms; but they preferred their allegiance to Cræsus, before the friendship of a less known, and perhaps severer, tyrant. When the fortune of war, or rather the superiority of his own genius, had given Cyrus possession of all the neighbouring provinces, the Ionians were forward to declare, by embassy, their acceptance of his proffered alliance; or, if that should now be refused, to request his protection on the same terms granted by his Lydian predecessor. This submissive proposal only inflamed the ambi-

Cyrus threatens the Ionians, Olymp. lviii. 2. A. C. 547.

tion of the Persian: and his celebrated answer,* on this occasion, clearly announced to the Greeks, that if they would escape the rigour of servitude, they must owe their safety to the strenuous exertions of a brave defence, not to the clemency of Cyrus.

When his hostile intentions were made known in **Measures of the Asiatic colonies.** Ionia, the inhabitants of that delightful country assembled in the Panionian grove, their ordinary rendezvous in general and important deliberations. This place,

which, together with the adjoining promontory of Mycalé, was solemnly consecrated to Neptune, formed the centre of the Ionic coast. Towards the north, extended the spacious bay of Ephesus, beyond which the beautiful peninsula of Clazomené stretched an hundred miles into the Ægean. On the south, the territory of Miletus occupied sixty-two miles of the winding shore. But the Milesians sent not their deputies to the present convention; for having been the confederates, not the subjects of Cræsus, they were admitted into the Persian al-

liance on terms of equality and independence. The **The Ionian confederacy.** Grecian interest in Asia, thus ungenerously abandoned by the principal member of the confederacy,

was supported with unusual spirit and unanimity by all the inferior communities. Representatives immediately appeared from Myus and Priéné, which were situate, like Miletus, on the coast of Caria; from Ephesus, Colophon, Lebedus, Tros, Clazomené, Erythræ, Phocæa, and Smyrna, which formed the maritime part of Lydia; and from the isles of Chios and Samos, which completed the whole number of the Ionic settlements.

Meanwhile the Eolians, alarmed by the same **That of the Eolians.** danger, convened in their ancient capital of Cymé.

* After the oriental fashion, he answered them by an apologue. A piper seeing a great swarm of fishes in the sea, began to play, in order to allure them to land. But as they disregarded his music, he employed a net with better success. When caught, the fishes jumped about in the net. But he told them, "It is unnecessary now to dance, since I have ceased to play." Herodot. l. i. c. cxli.

Their inferior towns were Larissa, Neontichus, Tenus, Cilla, Notion, Æginoæssa, Pitané, Ægæa, Myrina, and Greneia. Their territory was more extensive and more fertile than that of their Ionian rivals, but their climate less temperate,* their harbours less commodious, and their cities far less considerable in power and fame.

It may seem extraordinary that the Dorians, especially those inhabiting the peninsula of Caria, Of the Dorians. who were likewise destined to feel the Persian power, should not have joined in measures necessary for the common defence. But this circumstance it is still possible to explain. Of the six Doric republics, who annually assembled at Triopium, to celebrate the festival of Apollo, four† were encouraged, by their insular situation, to contemn the threats of Cyrus. Cnidus, as will appear hereafter, hoped to derive from art the same advantages which its confederates, Cos, Lindus, Jalisus, and Camirus, enjoyed by nature. And Hilicarnassus, the sixth Dorian state, as we are informed with a laudible impartiality by a native of that city, had been recently excluded from the Triopian festival. This disgrace was occasioned by the sordid avarice of Agasicles the Halicarnassian, who having conquered in the Triopian games, carried away the tripod, which was the prize of his victory; whereas, according to an established rule, he ought to have consecrated it in the temple of Apollo. His sacrilege deprived his country of the common benefits of the Dorian name.‡

* Herodotus' encomium on the climate of Ionia is remarkable: *Οἱ δὲ Ἴωνες οὗτοι, τῶν καὶ τὸ Πανίωνιον ἐστὶ, πρὸς μὲν οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῶν οὐρῶν ἐν τῷ καλλίστῳ ἐντυχάνον ἰδρυσάμενοι πόλεις πάντων ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν*: "These Ionians, to whom Panionium belongs, have built cities in the finest climate, and in the most beautiful situations, of all men whom we know." He then proceeds to observe, that the countries on all sides of Ionia were oppressed by cold and humidity on the one hand, or heat and drought on the other. Herodot. l. i. c. cxlii.

† Three in the isle of Rhodes, one in Cos.

‡ Herodot. l. i. c. cxliv.

Contrast
between
the ancient
and modern
state of
Lower
Asia.

To enliven the dryness of geographical description, essential, however, to the perspicuity of the present narrative, we should in vain turn our thoughts to the actual condition of the Asiatic shore. Few vestiges remain of the Doric and Eolic cities ; and even the Ionic, which far surpassed them in magnificence and splendour, can scarcely be recognised by the learned and curious traveller. Nothing now remains but the indelible impressions of nature ; the works of men have perished with themselves. The physical advantages of Lower Asia continue nearly* the same now as two thousand years ago ; but the moral condition of that country, compared to what it once was, is the silent obscurity of the grave, contrasted with the vivid lustre of active life.

The Asiatic
Greeks
send an
embassy,
craving aid,
to the mo-
ther coun-
try.
Olymp.
lviii.
A. C. 540.

The Asiatic Greeks having examined the state of their affairs, felt their own weakness, compared with the strength of the enemy. In forming their establishments in Asia, they had confined themselves to a long and narrow line on the coast, looking with a wishful eye towards the mother country, from which, in every calamity, they expected assistance and protection. The result, therefore, of the present deliberation was to send an embassy into Greece, in order to explain the danger to which they were exposed, and to show the necessity of powerful and timely aid. It might have been expected that Attica, the native country of the Ionians, should have received the first visit of the ambassadors ; but Athens was then governed by the tyrant Pisistratus, who, it was supposed, would be averse to take arms against a tyrant like himself. Sparta, though a republic of greater power and renown, was little connected, either by commerce or affinity, with the Greeks of Asia. The proposals of the Asiatic ambassadors, therefore, were very coolly received by the Spartan senate. On such occasions, however,

* The changes in the face of the country, produced chiefly by the receding of the sea, may be seen in the splendid work of Mons. Choiseul Gouffier, *Le Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce*, &c.

it was customary to take the opinions also of the people. In the assembly convened for this purpose, Pythermus, a Phocæan, clothed with purple, as a mark of his consideration in his native country, spoke for himself and his colleagues. But the beauties of his Ionic dialect were unable to move the resolution of the Lacedæmonians, who, mindful of the ancient enmity between the Ionic and the Doric race, declined sending any forces into Asia, to resist the arms of Cyrus. Though their generosity furnished no public assistance, their caution privately despatched several Spartan citizens to observe the operations of the war. When these men arrived in Ionia, they were easily persuaded to exceed the bounds of their commission. They appointed Lacrines, the most considerable of their number, to travel to the Lydian capital, in order to

The Spartans remonstrate with Cyrus against his design of subduing the Asiatic Greeks.

acquaint Cyrus, that if he committed hostilities against any of the Grecian cities, the Lacedæmonian republic would know how to punish his injustice. Cyrus, astonished at such an insolent message from a people altogether unknown to him, asked the Greeks present, (for there was always a great number of Grecian fugitives in the armies of their neighbours,) who the Lacedæmonians were?* and what number of men they could bring into the field? When informed of these particulars, he replied to the Spartan ambassador, "That he never should fear men who had a square in the midst of their city, in which they met together to practise mutual falsehood and deception,† and that if he continued to enjoy the blessings of health, he hoped to afford the Spartans more domestic reasons of complaint, than his military preparations against the Greeks of Asia."

His answer to them.

The interview with Lacrines happened among the last public transactions during Cyrus' residence

His lieutenant Harpa-

* Herodotus leaves it uncertain whether this ignorance was not affected the better to mark his contempt.

† Cyrus alludes to the market-places, or public squares, common in all Grecian cities, with the use of which the Persians were totally unacquainted, "being destitute," as Herodotus says, "of all places of public resort."

gus reduces at Sardis. Having reduced Cressus into captivity, all the coun- the only enemy in those parts who seemed worthy tries of the only enemy in those parts who seemed worthy Lower Asia. of his arms, he was eager to return towards the Olymp. lx. East, in order to complete his conquests in Upper 2. Asia. The Grecians he knew to be a warlike peo- A. C. 539. ple; but as their numbers were inconsiderable, their cities small and ill fortified, he thought proper to attempt in person enterprises of great renown, and to commit the Grecian war to the skill of his lieutenant, Harpagus.*

In the course of a few months, this general made himself master of all the countries of Lower Asia, possessed by either Greeks or barbarians. Having the command of men and labour, he caused mounds of earth to be thrown up adjacent to the Grecian walls. In this service, immense numbers must have perished by the darts of the enemy; but the work was no sooner completed, than the Persians, running up to the mounds, got possession of the walls, drove the Greeks from their battlements overpowered them from their own fortifications, entered and sacked their towns.†

The Pho- When we consider the fury with which the wars cæans leave of the ancients were carried on, and reflect that the their coun- immediate consequences of a defeat were servitude try. or death, we have reason to believe that the Greeks Olymp. lx. would make a resolute and bloody defence. This 2. indeed sufficiently appears by the evidence of a few A. C. 539. scattered facts preserved in history. The first place which Harpagus attacked was the celebrated capital of the Phocæans, the most northern city of Ionia. The inhabitants, as already mentioned, were famous for their long and successful navigations in the course of which they had often visited the coasts of Spain, the Mexico and Peru of the ancient world. The money derived from that country had enabled them to build the best fortification that was to be seen in all those parts;

* His predecessor, Mazares, died almost immediately after he had taken Priene and Magnesia, and sold the inhabitants for slaves. Herodot. l. i. c. lii.

† Herodot. lib. i. cap. clxii. clxiii. & seq.

yet they entertained not any hopes of resisting the Persian invaders. Such, however, was their love of liberty, and their dread of seeing in their streets the army of a conqueror, that they resolved on a measure which has been often proposed, but seldom executed. When Harpagus sent them his commands, they begged the favour of a day's pause for deliberation. In all probability they had already embraced many necessary measures for effecting their escape; for, during that short interval, their ships were prepared, their money and goods put on board, their wives and families embarked, and the whole community was floating on the waves, when the Persians arrived to take possession of desolated dwellings and empty walls. The advantageous situation of Phocæa, and the pains which had been employed to improve and to embellish it, make this resolution appear the more extraordinary; if any thing, at least, can add to the wonder, that a whole people should unanimously abandon their temples, their altars, and what in ancient times seemed not less sacred, the tombs of their ancestors; should totally divest themselves of every right to a country which they had been accustomed to call their own; and set sail with their wives and children, ignorant whither to direct their course, or in what friendly port they might expect protection or repose.*

The Phocæan fleet, consisting of more than two hundred sail, made for the isle of Chios, which, of all the Ionic settlements, seemed most secure against the Persian arms. Having arrived there, they endeavoured to purchase from the Chians the small Oenussian islands; but the Chians, jealous of their commerce, and knowing the adventurous spirit of the fugitives, denied their request. The Phocæans thus cruelly rejected by men of the same race and language with themselves set sail on a much longer voyage, for the isle of Cyrrus, or Corsica, where, about twenty years before, they had formed a small establishment. As they coasted in the night, along the solitary shore of their ancient

* Herodot. l. i. c. clxiv.

city, a few ships, manned with enterprising crews, landed in the harbour, surprised the Persian garrison, and put every man to the sword. After applauding this memorable act of revenge, the whole fleet transported with rage against the Persians, bound themselves by mutual oaths never to return to Phocæa, until a burning ball of iron, which they threw into

the sea, should again emerge unextinguished.* Yet such is the powerful attachment of men to their

ancient habitations, that in a few hours, more than one half the fleet, unable to resist the alluring prospect of their native shore, disregarded their oaths, and sailed for the well-known harbour. The destruction of the Persian garrison removed the only obstacle in the way of immediate possession; and the blame of this massacre might be thrown on their countrymen who fled, while those who returned to Phocæa might prove their innocence, by speedily submitting to every burden imposed on them. Meanwhile, the best and bravest portion of the Phocæan republic arrived with safety at the island of Corsica, where, their subsequent adventures not being immediately connected with our present subject, will merit attention in another part of this history.†

The Teians
settle in Ab-
dera.
Olymp. ix.
2.
A. C. 539.

The Phocæans were not the only people of Asia-
tic Greece who deserted their country, rather than
surrender their liberty. The Teians, who inhabited
the southern shore of the Ionic peninsula, had not
yet been softened into cowardice by the effeminate
muse of Anacreon. They followed the generous example
which the inhabitants of Phocæa had set; forsook a city in
which they could no longer remain free, and sought refuge in
Abdera, an ancient colony of Clazomenè on the coast of
Thrace, and near the mouth of the river Nessus.‡ The city
of Clazomenè, now mentioned, was built on the
continent; but on the present occasion, the inhabi-
tants, to avoid slavery, settled in eight small islands,

Measures of
the Clazo-
menians.

* Herodot. l. i. c. clxv.

† Idem, *ibid.*

‡ Herodot. l. i. c. lxxviii. & c. clxxviii.

at a little distance from the shore, on which they founded a new city, the model of that of Venice. The advantage which the Clazomenians enjoyed by nature, the Cnidians ^{Of the Cnidians.} endeavoured to procure by art. They dwelt at the extremity of the Carian peninsula; and their city being joined to the continent by an isthmus of only half a mile broad, they attempted, by means of a ditch, to detach themselves entirely from the main land. If this could be effected, they might despise the power of their enemies, who not having as yet subdued the Phœnicians, possessed not any naval force sufficient to conquer the Grecian isles. But the approach of the Persians, and still more their own superstitious fears, interrupted this useful undertaking; and the city of Cnidus, as well as all others on the Asiatic coast, Miletus alone excepted, were reduced to unconditional submission under the Persian yoke.

While the arms of Harpagus were thus successful ^{Cyrus besieges Babylon.} on the western shore, those of Cyrus acquired still greater glory in the central parts of Asia.* With ^{Olymp. lx. A. C. 539.} amazing rapidity his victorious troops overran the rich countries between the Mediterranean and the Tigris. Every thing gave way before their valour and their fortune. The city of Babylon alone, the ancient and proud capital of the Assyrian empire, opposed its lofty and impenetrable walls to the ambition of the conqueror. When all the countries round were reduced into obedience, it might seem absurd in the inhabitants of one place to think of resisting the Persian arms. But when we consider the singular resources of this place, we shall perceive, that a design which would have been obstinate folly in any other citizens, was no more than proper firmness in the Babylonians. Their capital,† which was celebrated for

* Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, and Herodotus, contain the materials for the reign of Cyrus, as far as it is connected with the history of Greece. It is foreign to the subject of the present work, to examine the differences between these authors.

† For the successive capitals of Assyria, see my *History of the World*, sect. ii.; and for a particular account of Babylon, see sect. iii.

its magnificence, wealth, and magnitude, when nothing deserving the name of capital existed elsewhere in the world, was situate in a spacious plain, surrounded on all sides, by broad and rapid rivers. The outward wall was of a firm quadrangular form, seventy-five feet high, extending forty-eight miles in circumference, and surrounded by a deep ditch continually supplied with water. Behind this extraordinary bulwark, of whose existence the wall of China and the pyramids of Egypt can alone serve to convince modern incredulity, was another of almost equal dimensions; and besides both these general fortifications, each division of the city had its appropriate mounds and defences. It is unnecessary to describe the parks or paradises, the towers, and temples, which by their singular greatness, evidently announced the seat of a mighty empire. These magnificent monuments tended, indeed, to adorn, but others less splendid, served to defend Babylon.* There were magazines of corn and provisions, sufficient for maintaining the inhabitants during twenty years; and arsenals, which supplied with arms such a number of fighting men as seemed equal to the conquest or defence of a powerful monarchy. It was to be expected that Babylon would exert its utmost strength, being then governed by Labynetus, or Belthazar, whose despotism, injustice, and impiety exceeded even the crimes of his father Nebuchadnezzar, and left him no room to expect forgiveness from the clemency of Cyrus.

Takes the city by stratagem. Olymp. lx. 3. A. C. 538. During two years Cyrus blocked up the city, without attaining any nearer prospect of success than when he first approached its walls. The events of this memorable siege are not related by ancient writers. We only know, that the efforts of the Persians proved fruitless, until strength was directed by stratagem. The river Euphrates entered by a deep channel the northern walls of Babylon, and issuing forth from the opposite side, almost equally bisected the city. Of this circumstance Cyrus availed himself to become master of the place. He employed his

* Herodot. l. i. c. clxxix. & seq.

numerous army in digging a profound cavern adjacent to the lofty mound which confined the course of the river. This work being completed, he patiently waited an opportunity for cutting the mound, and thus turning the waters of the Euphrates into the prepared cavern; since if this could be done without being perceived by the enemy, his troops, stationed at the two passages of the Euphrates in and out of the city, might enter Babylon by the channel which the river had abandoned. This design was happily executed, when the Babylonians, who had long despised the impotent efforts of the besiegers, were employed in celebrating a festival, with every circumstance of the most licentious security. The mound of the Euphrates being divided, the highest waters deserted their channel, the river became fordable, and the troops of Cyrus, who, had not the Babylonians been sunk in riot and debauchery, might have been confined between the walls, and overwhelmed by darts from the battlements, made their entrance unperceived into the place, cut to pieces the unarmed inhabitants; and having punished an impious king and his voluptuous courtiers, took possession of the greatest and richest city of the ancient world.*

This memorable event rendered Cyrus sole master of those valuable countries around the Tigris and Euphrates, which, from time immemorial, had been the seat of despotism and luxury, wealth and wickedness. The active ambition of this great prince was adopted by the emulation of his immediate successors. His son Cambyses received the submission of Tyre and Cyprus, and effected the important conquest of Egypt, in the consequences of which the Greek colonies in that country, and on the adjoining coast of Africa, were involved.

In the eighth century before the Christian æra, the adventurous colonies of Ionia and Caria had, amidst other commercial, or rather piratical expeditions, undertaken a voyage to Egypt. Their

Conquests
of his suc-
cessor,
Cambyses.
Olymp.
lxii. 4.
A. C. 529.
Olymp.
lxiv. 3.
A. C. 524.

Psammeti-
chus raised
to the
throne of
Egypt by
Greek pi-

* Herodot. l. i. c. clxxvii.—c. cxcii. Confer. Aristot. Politic. l. iii. c. 2.

rates, who
settle in
that coun-
try.

brazen armour,* their courage, and their activity, were beheld with amazement and terror by the Egyptians, often divided by faction, and then torn by sedition. Psammetichus, one of the many pretenders to the throne, engaged the Greeks in his service. Through their valour and discipline, he made himself master of Egypt. His rewards and promises prevailed on them to settle in that country. They upheld the throne of his successors, until Apries, the fourth in descent from Psammetichus, having undertaken an unfortunate expedition against the Greek colony of Cyrenè, was dethroned by Amasis, the contemporary and ally of Cræsus.†

Are em-
ployed as
the body
guard of his
successor
Amasis.

Amasis rivalled the Lydian prince in his partiality for the language and manners of the Greeks. He raised a Cyrenean woman to the honours of his bed. The Greeks who had served his predecessors, and who, in consequence of the Egyptian law, obliging the son to follow the profession of his father, now amounted to near thirty thousand, he removed to Memphis, his capital, and employed them as his body guard. He encouraged the correspondence of this colony with the mother country; invited new inhabitants from Greece into Egypt; promoted the commercial intercourse between the two nations; and assigned to the Greek merchants for their residence the town and district of Naucratis, on the Nile, where they enjoyed the free exercise of their religious processions and solemnities, and where the industry of the little island of Ægina in Europe, and the opulence of several Greek cities in Asia, erected temples after the fashion of their respective countries.‡

Cambyses
conquers
Egypt.
Olymp.
lxiii. 4.
A. C. 525.

This able prince was succeeded by his son Psammenitus, soon after Cambyses mounted the throne of Persia. While Cambyses made preparations for invading Egypt, Psammenitus imprudently excited the resentment of Phanes,|| a Halicarnassean by

* Herodot. l. ii. c. clii. & seq.

† Herodot. *ibid.* & Diodor. Sicul. l. i. c. xlvi.

‡ Herodot. l. ii. c. clii. & seq.

|| Herodot. l. iii. c. iv. &c.

birth, and an officer of much authority in the Grecian guards. Phanes having dexterously effected his escape from Egypt, offered his services to Cambyzes, who by this time had collected the Grecian and Phœnician fleets. This armament, however, seemed unequal to the conquest of Egypt; and to conduct an army thither by land, was an undertaking of extreme difficulty. The main obstacle was overcome by the experience of Phanes. He advised Cambyzes to purchase the friendship of an Arabian chief, who agreed to transport on camels a sufficient quantity of water for the use of the Persians in their passage through the desert. With the punctuality peculiar* to his nation, the Arabian fulfilled his engagement. The Persian army joined the fleet before Pelusium; that place regarded as the key of Egypt, surrendered after a short siege; Psammenitus was defeated in a great battle; and the whole kingdom submitted to a haughty conqueror,† whom prosperity rendered incapable of pity or remorse.

His cruel, outrageous, or rather frantic behaviour in Egypt, alarmed the neighbouring Africans, who sought to avert the tempest from themselves by speedy offers of submission and tribute. This prudent measure was adopted even by the Greek inhabitants of Cyrenaica, who had braved the united power of Egypt and Lybia. The African Greeks were a colony of Thera, the most southern island of the Ægæan, and itself a colony of the Lacedæmonians.‡ During the heroic ages, but it is uncertain at what precise æra, the adventurous islanders settled in that part of the Synus Syrticus, which derived its name from the principal city, Cyrenè, and which is now lost in the desert of Barca. Descended from Lacedæmon, the Cyreneans naturally preserved the regal form of government. Under Battus, the third prince of that name, their territory was well cultivated, and their cities populous and flourishing. Six centuries before the Christian æra, they received a consi-

The African
Greeks pay
tribute to
Cambyzes.
Their His-
tory.

* Herodot. *ibid.*

† *Idem, ibid.*

‡ Herodot. l. iv. c. clix. & seq.

derable accession of inhabitants from the mother country. Emboldened by this reinforcement, they attacked the neighbouring Lybians,* and seized on their possessions. The injured craved assistance from Apries king of Egypt.† A confederacy was thus formed, in order to repress the incursions, and to chastise the audacity of the European invaders. But the valour and discipline of Greece, though they yet feared to encounter the power of Cambyses, and the renown of Persia, always triumphed over the numbers and the ferocity of Africa:‡ nor did Cyrenè become tributary to Egypt, till Egypt itself had been subdued by a Grecian king, and the sceptre of the Pharaohs and of Sesostris had passed into the hands of the Ptolemies.||

Darius
Hystaspis
mounts the
throne of
Persia.
Olymp.
lxiv. 4.
A. C. 521.

Cambyes is said to have died by an accidental wound from his own sword. Darius Hystaspis, the third in succession to the empire, (for the short reign of the priest Smerdis deserves only to be mentioned in the history of the palace,) possessed the political abilities, but reached not the magnanimity, of Cyrus. His ambition was unbounded, and his avarice still greater than his ambition. To discriminate the characters of the three first and most illustrious of their monarchs, the Persians, in the expressive language of the East, styled Cyrus the father, Cambyses the master or tyrant, and Darius the broker, of the empire. The last-mentioned prince added the wealthy, but unwarlike nations of India to his dominions. This important acquisition, which closed the long series of Persian conquests in Asia, was formed into the twentieth satrapy, or great division of the empire. The other military enterprises of this prince (as we shall soon have occasion to relate) were less successful. But his reign is chiefly remarkable, as the supposed æra at which the religious and

* Herodot. l. iv. c. clix.

† Herodot. *ibid.* Diodor. Sicul. l. i. c. xlv.

‡ Herodot. *ibid.* & l. iii. c. clxi.

|| Strabo, l. ii. & l. xvii. p. 836. Pausan. l. i. for the history of Cyrenè, political and commercial, see my *History of the World*, chap. 3.

civil polity of the Persians received that form which they afterwards invariably retained.

Yet it must be acknowledged, that the greatest learning and ingenuity have failed in the arduous task of ascertaining the age, and still more of explaining the doctrine of Zoroaster. At whatever period he lived, he certainly did for the Persians, what Homer and Hesiod are said to have done for the Greeks.* His theogony,† as the Greeks would have called it, consisted in the extravagant doctrine of the two principles, in some moral precepts, and innumerable absurd ceremonies. The magi, or priests, who probably derived some share of their influence from practising those occult sciences afterwards distinguished by their name, were strongly protected by the authority of the prophet. "Though your good works," says the Sadder, "exceed the sands on the sea shore, or the stars of heaven, they will all be unprofitable, unless accepted by the priest; to whom you must pay tithes of all you possess, of your goods, of your lands, and of your money. The priests are the teachers of religion, they know all things, and deliver all men." Next to the priests, the royal family, and particularly the reigning prince, was the peculiar care of Zoroaster.‡ In their prayers and sacrifices, the Persians were not allowed to solicit individually for themselves the protection of Heaven, but only for the great king, and for the nation at large. In celebrating their religious worship, they employed neither altars, nor images, nor temples; they even derided the folly of such practises in others, probably (says Herodotus) not believing, like the Greeks, the nature of the gods to resemble that of men. On the summits of the highest mountains they sacrificed to the divinity; and the whole circle of the heavens they called God. They sacrificed, besides, to the elements, particularly fire, which they considered as the purest symbol,

The supposed age of Zoroaster.

Religion of the Persians.

* See above, p. 186.

† Herodot. l. i. c. cxxxii.

‡ For an account of Zoroaster and his residence Bactra, see History of the World, section ii.

and most powerful agent of the Divine Nature. They borrowed, however, the worship of some other divinities from the Assyrians and Arabians; for of all ancient nations, the Persians, according to Herodotus, were the most disposed to adopt the customs of their neighbours. They soon preferred the dress, and, as an essential part of dress, the arms of the Medes to their own. When they became acquainted with the Greeks, they learned the worst and most unnatural of their vices. There was scarcely any absurdity, or any wickedness, which they might not imbibe, from the licentious caprice, the universal corruption, and the excessive depravity of Babylon. The hardy and intrepid warriors, who had conquered Asia, were themselves subdued by the vices of that luxurious city. In the space of fifty-two years, which intervened between the taking of Babylon, and the disgraceful defeat at Marathon, the sentiments, as well as the manners of the Persians, underwent a total change; and, notwithstanding the boasted simplicity of their religious worship, we shall find them thenceforth oppressed by the double yoke of despotism and superstition, whose combined influence extinguished every generous feeling, and checked every manly impulse of the soul.*

under Cy- The tendency towards this internal decay was
rus. not perceived during the reign of Cyrus, whose extraordinary abilities enabled him to soften the rigours of despotism, without endangering his authority. He committed not the whole weight of government to the insolence of satraps, those proud substitutes of despotism; who were ever ready to betray their trust, and abuse their power. The inferior governors of towns and districts were appointed and removed by himself, to whom only they were accountable. By an institution, somewhat resembling the modern post, he provided for exact and ready information concerning the public occurrences in every part of his dominions. The vigilant shepherd of his people, he was always ready to hear their pe-

* Xenoph. de Inst. Cyri, l. iii. p. 238—243.

titions, to redress their grievances, and to reward their merit. Nor did the love of ease or pleasure ever interfere with the discharge of his duty, in which he placed the greatest glory and happiness of his reign.*

His successors were universally distinguished by an exorbitant ambition, nourished by the immense resources of their empire, which under Darius amounted to fourteen thousand five hundred and sixty Eubœic talents, a sum equal to three millions six hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds sterling. Of this vast revenue, which, considering the value of money in ancient times, exceeded thirty millions at present, the Greek cities on the coast, together with the Carians, Lycians, and several other nations of Asia Minor, paid only the thirty-sixth part, a little more than an hundred thousand pounds. Besides this stated income, Darius might on every necessary occasion demand the money and services of his subjects. His predecessors were contented with voluntary contributions, and a militia. This prince established taxes, and a standing army. The number of his troops equalled the resources of his treasury; and both corresponded to the extent of his dominions, which comprehended the greatest and most populous nations of the earth. The barbarity of the northern Scythians, and the pertinacious spirit of the European Greeks, the only enemies whom it remained for him to conquer, seemed feeble barriers against the progress of universal monarchy. In the extensive regions of Asia, every head bowed to the tiara of the great king, who in an annual progress through the central parts of his empire, spent the winter in the warm plains of Babylon; enjoyed the happy temperature of spring in the city of Susa, which adorned the flowery banks of the Eulæus; and avoided the summer heats in his spacious palace at Ecbatan, fanned by the refreshing breezes of the Median mountains.†

Under Darius.
Olymp.
lxxv. 4.
A. C. 517.
Resources
and grandeur
of that
monarch.

* Xenoph. *ibid.* p. 230.

† Xenoph. *ibid.* & Herodot. l. iii. c. lxxix. & seq.

His expedi-
tion into
Scythia.
Olymp.
lxvi. 4.
A. C. 513.

But Darius could not enjoy the splendour of his present greatness, while a single nation had merited his resentment, without feeling the weight of his vengeance. The wandering hordes of Scythia have been, in all ages, formidable to the civilized kingdoms of the East. Thrice before the reign of Darius the inhabitants of that frozen region had overrun the finest provinces of Asia. Fighting against these barbarians, the founder of the Persian empire had lost his army and his life. It belonged to his warlike successor to punish the ferocity of that rude and uncultivated, but bold and high-minded people. With an army, it is said, of seven hundred thousand men, Darius traversed Asia Minor, crossed the Thracian Bosphorus, ravaged Thrace, and arrived on the banks of the Danube. Meanwhile a fleet of six hundred sail left the Asiatic coast, and passing the narrow seas which join the Ægean to the Euxine, coasted in a northern direction to the shores of the latter, entered the mouth of the Danube, and sailed along that river until they joined the army. The Danube was passed by the usual expedient of a bridge of boats, which was built by the assistance of the fleet, composed chiefly of Grecians who were left to guard the work of their hands against the dangers of the elements, and the destructive rage of the barbarians.*

Loses great
part of his
army.

This formidable army, collected from so many distant provinces, boldly entered the vast uncultivated wilds of Scythia, in which they continued for five months, continually exposed to hunger and thirst, and the darts of the flying enemy. When they prepared to return from an expedition in which they had already lost the best part of their strength, their good fortune, rather than their prudence, saved them from immediate destruction. It had been agitated among the Greeks, whether they ought not to demolish the bridge; a measure strongly recommended to them by the Scythian tribes, who having ravaged all the adjacent country, expected to revenge the invasion of the Per-

* Herodot. l. iv. c. i. & seq.

sians, by confining them, without resource, in an inhospitable desert. Miltiades, an Athenian, descended from the heroic Ajax, eagerly embraced this proposal. He was king, or tyrant, of the city of Cardia, situate near the neck of the Thracian Chersonnesus. There his uncle, of the same name, planted a Grecian colony, which uniting with the barbarous natives, formed a small community, the government of which descended to the son of his brother Cimon, who increased the population of the rising state by new inhabitants from Athens. The generous son of Cimon, though, like all the princes of those parts, he held his authority under the protection of Darius, preferred the recovery of national independence to the preservation of personal dignity. The other chiefs of the Grecian cities listened with apparent pleasure to his arguments for destroying the bridge, and thus delivered themselves for ever from the yoke of Persia. Histæus, tyrant of Miletus, was alone averse to this bold resolution. He observed to the little tyrants of the Asiatic Greeks, "that their own interest was intimately connected with the safety of Darius and his Persians. Under the auspicious influence of that powerful people, they each of them enjoyed royalty in their respective commonwealths: but should the empire of the Persians fall, (and what less could be expected from the destruction of Darius and his army?) the Greeks would immediately discover their partiality for republican government, banish their kings, and reassume liberty." The opinion of Histæus prevailed; the Persians repassed the Danube: but Miltiades, dreading their resentment, had previously retired to Athens, where, twenty-three years after the Scythian expedition, he enjoyed a more favourable opportunity of displaying his attachment to the cause of liberty, in the ever memorable battle of Marathon.*

Miltiades approves the advice of the Scythians for cutting off his retreat.

Histæus, tyrant of Miletus, opposes this measure.

His opinion prevails. Olymp. lxvi. 4. A. C. 513.

If the public spirited Athenian excited the hatred and revenge, the selfish tyrant of Miletus deserved

He accompanies Da-

* Herodot. l. iv. c. i. & seq.

rius to Up- the gratitude and the rewards of Darius. To con-
per Asia. tinue the sovereign of his native city seemed a sta-
tion below his merit; he was taken into the confidence of
Darius, and accompanying him to Sardis, and afterwards to
Susa, became the friend, counsellor, and favourite of the great
king. While Histiaëus acted such a distinguished part at the
Persian court, his nephew Aristagoras, to whom he had com-
mitted the government of Miletus, incurred the displeasure of
Artaphernes,* the brother of Darius, and governor of Sardes.
The representations of that minister, he well knew, would be
sufficient to ruin him, both with his uncle, and with Darius,
by whom he might be deprived not only of his authority, but
of his life. Governed by these considerations, Aristagoras
meditated a revolt,† when a messenger unexpectedly arrived
from Histiaëus, exhorting him to that measure. The crafty

His in-
trigues with
Aristagoras;
Olymp.
lxix. 3.
A. C. 502.

Milesian, who disliked the restraint of a court, and
the uncouth manners of the Persians, languished for
an honourable pretence to return to his native coun-
try; and he saw not any means more proper for
affording such an opportunity, than the tumults of
the Greeks, which, as lieutenant of Darius he would probably
be sent to quell. His message confirmed the resolution of
Aristagoras, who, as the first act of rebellion against the Per-
sians, formally renounced all power over his fellow-citizens.‡

who excites
the Ionians
to revolt
from the
Persian go-
vernment.

After giving this seemingly disinterested proof of
his regard for the public, he erected the standard of
freedom, which was soon surrounded by the flower
of the Ionian youth; by whose assistance, travers-
ing the whole coast, he abolished in every city the
authority of kings, and proclaimed to all worthy to acquire it,
the double blessing of civil liberty and national independence.||

* Aristagoras had quarrelled with Megabates, the kinsman of Artaphernes, (since both were of the blood royal,) during a fruitless expedition, in which they seem to have enjoyed a joint command, against the island of Naxos, one of the Cyclades. Herodot. l. ii. c. xxviii. & seq.

† Herodot. l. v. c. xxxvi. xxxvii.

‡ Herodot. l. v. c. xxxvi. xxxvii.

|| Herodot. l. v. c. xxxviii.

The revolt thus happily effected, could not how-
 ever be maintained without more powerful resources
 than the strength, the bravery, and the enthusiasm
 of the Asiatic Greeks. In order to resist the force of the
 Persian empire, which, it was easy to foresee, would soon be
 exerted in crushing their rebellion, it was necessary for the
 Ionians to obtain the protection and co-operation of their
 brethren in Europe. This important object was committed
 to the prudence and activity of Aristagoras, who having set-
 tled the affairs of the East, undertook, for the public service,
 an embassy into Greece.

Lacedæmon still continued, rather in name, how-
 ever, than in reality, the most powerful state in that
 country. Though their government was, in strict
 language, of the republican kind, yet the Spartans sometimes
 bestowed an extraordinary authority on their kings. This de-
 gree of pre-eminence, more honourable than any that birth or
 fortune can bestow, the public esteem had conferred on Cleome-
 nes. To him therefore Aristagoras, after arriving at Sparta,
 found it necessary to apply;* and in order to effect the object
 of his commission, he described to the Spartan king the im-
 mense wealth of the Persians, which they had neither virtue
 to enjoy nor valour to defend. He painted in the warmest
 colours, the love of liberty which animated the Ionians, and
 their firm expectation that the Spartans would enable them to
 maintain that political independence, which their own laws
 taught them to consider as the most valuable of all human
 possessions. Their interest and their glory, he observed,
 were on this occasion most fortunately united: for how much
 greater glory might be acquired by conquering Asia, than by
 ravaging Greece? and how much easier would it be to defeat
 the light Persian archers, than to subdue the Arcadians or Ar-
 gives, who knew, as well as the Spartans themselves, the use
 of the spear and buckler? Their journey to Susa, the rich capi-
 tal of the great king, would be not only safe but delightful.

Sails to
 Greece to
 crave assis-
 tance.

His pro-
 ceedings at
 Sparta.

* Herodot. l. v. c. xlix. & seq.

To prove this, he produced a brazen tablet, on which, it is said, were engraved all the countries, seas, and rivers of the ancient world. Pointing to the coast of Asia Minor, and the cities of the Ionians, with which Cleomenes was already acquainted, he showed him adjoining to these the beautiful and rich country of Lydia. Next to the celebrated kingdom of Cræsus (he observed) extended the fertile fields of Phrygia, equally adapted to agriculture and pasturage. Beyond Phrygia lie the territories of the Cappadocians, whom the Greeks called white* Syrians. Farther towards the east dwell the wealthy Cilicians, who pay an annual tribute of five hundred talents to the king; next to them live the Armenians, abounding in cattle; and last of all the Matienians, bordering on the province of Cissia, and the flowery banks of the Choaspes,† containing the superb city of Susa, and the invaluable treasury of Darius. This immense space is filled by well-inhabited countries, intersected by excellent roads, and supplied at proper distances with convenient places of refreshment and accommodation, even for a great army. Cleomenes having patiently listened to the verbose description of the Milesian, answered him with laconic brevity, “in three days I will decide concerning the propriety of your demand.”‡ At the expiration of that time, Aristagoras failed not to repair to the place appointed, where he was soon met by the Spartan king, who asked him, in how many days they might march to Susa? Here the usual prudence of Aristagoras forsook him; for he ought not to have told the true distance, says Herodotus, if he had wished to engage the Spartans to accompany him. But he replied unguardedly, That travelling at the rate of about eighteen miles a day, they might reach Susa in three months. Upon this, Cleomenes exclaimed with indignation, “Milesian stranger, you must begone from Sparta before the setting of the sun; for you have made a very inauspicious and a

* From the fairness of their complexions, compared with the more southern branches of the great Syrian nation.

† Otherwise called the Eulæus, as above, p. 261.

‡ Herodot. *ibid.*

very dangerous proposal, in advising the Spartans to undertake a journey of three months from the Grecian sea." With this severe reprimand he left Aristagoras, and immediately returned home. The artful Milesian, however, was not to be disconcerted by a first refusal. According to the custom of ancient times, when men endeavoured to paint to the eye the feelings of the heart, he clothed himself in the garment of a suppliant, and sought protection in the house of Cleomenes. Having obtained the favour of a third audience, he attempted to effect by money what he could not accomplish by argument. But he found it as difficult to bribe, as it had been to persuade, the Spartan; and although he tempted him with the offer of above five thousand pounds in value (an immense sum in Greece in those days,) it was impossible to render Cleomenes propitious to his design.*

Aristagoras, thus ungenerously dismissed from Sparta, had recourse to the Athenians, from whom he had reason to expect a more favourable reception. Athens was the mother country of the Ionians, who formed the greatest and most distinguished portion of the Asiatic Greeks. The Athenians, as a maritime state, had always maintained a closer connexion than the Spartans with their distant colonies; and as they possessed, for that early age, a very considerable naval strength, they were not averse to a distant expedition. Besides these reasons, which at all times must have had no small influence on their councils, the present situation of their republic was peculiarly favourable to the cause of Aristagoras. The democratic form of polity gradually extended by the progressive spirit of freedom, had been defined by the laws of Solon, and confirmed by the unanimous approbation of the whole people. The public assembly, consisting of all citizens who had attained the age of manhood, was invested with the executive, as well as the legislative, powers of government. The nine archons were rather the

He applies
to Athens.

Constitution of that republic, as regulated by Solon. Olymp. xvi. 3. A. C. 594.

* Herodot. l. v. c. li.

ministers, than, as their name denotes, the governors of the republic. The senate, consisting first of four, and afterwards of five hundred members, was constituted by lot, the most popular mode of appointment. The court of the Areopagus, originally intrusted with the criminal jurisdiction, assumed an extensive control over the behaviour and manners of the citizens. It consisted only of such magistrates as had discharged with approbation the duties of their respective offices. The members were named for life; and, as from the nature of the institution, they were persons of a mature age, of an extensive experience, and who, having already attained the aim, had seen the vanity of ambition, their characters admirably fitted them for restraining the impetuous passions of the multitude, and for stemming the torrent of popular phrensy. Such was the government* enjoyed by the Athenians, which they fondly regarded as the most perfect of all human institutions, and which was peculiarly endeared to them at present, by the recent recovery of freedom, after a long, though, in general, not a cruel tyranny.

Usurpation
of Pisistratus.
Olymp.
1. 3.
A. C. 578.

The danger of tyranny is an evil necessarily attending every democratical republic, in which, as there is not a proper separation between the legislative and executive powers, the assembly must often intrust to one man those functions of government, which the collective body of the people are sometimes unable, and always ill qualified to exercise; and in which, therefore, the splendour of wealth may dazzle, the charms of eloquence may seduce, and the combined power of policy and prowess may intimidate and subdue the unsteady minds of the

* I forbear treating fully of the Athenian government and laws, until the establishment of what was called the Athenian empire. During more than sixty years, that republic maintained dominion over many hundred cities and colonies. The fate of all these, as well as the measures of independent and hostile states, depended on the proceedings of the Athenians. Then, and not till then, a thorough acquaintance with the internal constitution and state of Athens will become necessary for explaining the historical transactions which we shall have occasion to record.

ignorant vulgar. The fame of his Olympic victories could not procure for Cylon* the sovereignty of Athens ; and it is probable that many other unsuccessful candidates had aspired at this high object of ambition, before the arts and eloquence of Pisistratus, born, indeed, an Athenian citizen, but descended from the blood of ancient kings, obtained possession of the dangerous prize, which proved fatal to his family.

What his enterprising ability had acquired, his ^{Expulsion of Hippias. Olymp. lxvii. 3. A. C. 510.} firmness, his wisdom, and his moderation† enabled him long to maintain. So completely was his authority established, that on his death the government descended, as a private inheritance, to his son. Resentment of a personal injury‡ delivered the Athenians from the mild tyranny|| of Hipparchus ; though his murderers, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, were afterwards celebrated by the Athenians, not as the avengers of a private quarrel, but as the restorers of public freedom.§ His brother Hippias succeeding to the throne, treated his countrymen with a degree of severity which they had not hitherto experienced : his person and his government became alike odious ; he was expelled by the assistance of the Lacedæmonians, and the general indignation of an injured people, after his family had, with various interruptions, governed Athens sixty-eight years. —510. ^{A. C. 578.}

* Thucyd. l. i. c. cxxvi. Plut. in Solon.

† Plato in Hipparch. Herodot. Thucydid. i. 20. Aristot. Polit. l. v. c. xii.

‡ In this circumstance Plato agrees with Thucydides, whose account of the transaction differs widely from that of most other ancient writers. Thucydid. l. vi.

|| Plato, p. 234. The orators Andocides and Isocrates agree with the philosopher. Meursius has made a careful collection of all the passages relating to the Pisistratidæ, in Pisistratus.

§ *Αἰεὶ σφω κλεος ἔσεται κατ' αἰῶν*

Φίλτατε Ἀρμόδιε καὶ Ἀριστογείτων

Ὅτι τοῦ τυραννοῦ κτανέτον

Ἰσονομίης τ' Ἀθηνᾶς ἐποιήσατον.

ALCÆUS.

“Your glory shall last for ever, most beloved Harmodius and Aristogeiton, because you slew the tyrant, and procured equal laws for Athens.”

Rapid success of the Athenians after the re-establishment of democracy. A. C. 509. —504.

The power of Athens was great in ancient times ; but it became incomparably greater after the re-establishment of democracy.* So advantageous to the powers of the human mind is the enjoyment of liberty, even in its least perfect form, that in a few years after the expulsion of Hippias, the Athenians acquired an ascendant in Greece, which was fatal to their enemies, painful to their rivals, and even dangerous to themselves. They chastised the insolence of the islanders of Eubœa and Ægina, who contended with them in naval power ; and humbled the pride of Thebes, which rivalled them in military glory. Favoured, as they fondly believed, by the protection of their tutelary Minerva, and animated as they strongly felt, by the possession of an equal freedom, they adorned their capital with the richest spoils of their vanquished enemies. Their influence soon extended over the northern parts of Greece ; and the fame of their power, still greater than their power itself, alarmed the fears and jealousy of the Peloponnesians. The Spartans, in particular, who had assisted them in restoring the democracy, now perceived the error of which they had been guilty, in promoting the greatness of an ambitious rival. In order to prevent† the dangerous consequences of their folly, they

* This observation, which is literally translated, has weight, from such an old and honest historian as Herodotus. His words are still stronger in another passage : *Ἀγροὶ δὲ οὐ κατὰ ἐν μόνον ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ ἡ ἰσχυρία ὥς ἐς χρημασκοῦνται, εἰ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι τυραννεύοντες μὲν, οὐδαμῶν τῶν σφείας περιόικοντων ἦσαν ἀμεινούς, ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυραννῶν, μακρῶ πρώτοι ἐγένοντο.* Herodot. l. v. c. lxxviii.

† Besides this principal reason, the Spartans, and particularly their king Cleomenes, had private grounds for quarrel with the Athenians. The Alcæonidæ, a powerful family, and rivals of the Pisistratidæ, had been banished Athens during the usurpation of the latter. Having repeatedly tried, without success, to return by force, they at length had recourse to stratagem. The temple of Delphi having been destroyed by fire, they contracted with the Amphictyons for rebuilding it ; and instead of employing Porine stone, agreeably to their contract, they built the whole front of Parian marble. This generosity gained them the good-will of the Amphictyons ; bribery pro-

summoned to a congress all the allies in Peloponnesus, that their united wisdom might concert proper measures for resisting, ere it was too late, the encroachments of the Athenians, which threatened the liberties of all Greece. Their allies readily obeyed the welcome summons, and the deputies of the several states having assembled in the Spartan forum, eagerly listened to the speakers appointed to explain the intentions of that republic. The Lacedæmonian orators acknowledged the mistaken policy of their country in expelling from Athens the family of Pisistratus, and delivering the government of that city into the hands of a most ungrateful populace, who had since treated them with much indignity. “But why (they proceeded) should we relate private injuries? Have they not insulted all their neighbours? Does not their pride daily increase with their power? and is there not reason to dread, that their growing ambition may endanger, and at length destroy, the public safety? In order to prevent this evil, we have recalled Hippias from banishment. And let us, therefore, by our united efforts, reinstate the son of Pisistratus in that power and authority of which we most injudiciously deprived him.” A. C. 504.

The speech of the Lacedæmonians produced not the intended effect. The Peloponnesians, how jea- Their design of restoring Hip-

cured them the favour of the Pythia, or rather of the directors of the oracle; and the Lacedæmonians were commanded by Apollo to deliver Athens from tyrants. This was effected by Cleomenes, who, upon discovering the collusion, between the oracle and the Alcæonidæ, was moved with great resentment against Clisthenes, the head of that family, by whom he and his country had been so shamefully deceived. He therefore united with Isagoras, the rival of Clisthenes. The latter, together with his partisans, were again banished from Athens. But the Athenians perceiving it to be the intention of the prevailing faction to establish an oligarchy, flew to arms. Cleomenes and Isagoras took refuge in the citadel. The third day they surrendered on capitulation. The Lacedæmonians were allowed to retire in safety. Isagoras was banished; many of his partisans executed; and the Alcæonidæ, headed by Clisthenes, again returned in triumph. From this time democracy, in the strict sense of the word, continued, with short interruptions, to prevail in Athens. Herodot. l. v. c. lxxv. & seq. Thucyd. l. vi. c. lviii.

prias proves abortive. lous soever of the Athenian greatness, were still more jealous of the power of tyrants; and many of them, who had experienced the haughtiness of Sparta, were not dissatisfied with beholding a rival to that republic in the northern division of Greece. The other deputies expressed their dissent by silent disapprobation; but Sosicles, the Corinthian, declared his sentiments at great length in a speech which alike marks the manly character of the age, and the youthful dawn of Grecian eloquence. "Then surely, Lacedæmonians, will the heavens sink below the earth, and the earth tower sublime in the air; men will inhabit the depths of the sea, and fishes will take possession of the land, when you, formerly the bulwarks of liberty, shall demolish the popular governments of Greece, and establish tyrannies in their room, than which nothing can be more unjust or more pernicious." After this pompous exordium, the Corinthian proceeded to describe and exaggerate the calamities which his own countrymen had suffered from the usurpation of Cypselus, and his son Perian-der. Having related, at great length, the proud, cruel, and despotic actions of those princes, "Such," added he, "are the genuine fruits of absolute power; but I adjure you by the Grecian gods! attempt not to re-establish it in Athens. The Corinthians were seized with astonishment, when they heard that you had sent for Hippias; I myself was amazed at beholding him in this assembly; yet we never suspected that you proposed to restore him, in triumph, to his much injured city. If you still persist in this fatal resolution, know that the Corinthians disavow all part in a design equally unjust and impious."* The other deputies listened with pleasure to the boldness of Sosicles, who expressed the sentiments which they themselves felt, but which their respect for the Lacedæmonians obliged them to conceal. Hippias alone opposed the general voice of the assembly, attesting the same gods which his opponent had invoked, and prophesying, that at some future time the Corinthians would repent their present conduct,

* Herodot. l. v. c. xcii.

and regret their cruel injustice to the son of Pisistratus, when their own citizens, as well as the rest of Greece, should fatally experience the dangerous ambition of Athens. This remonstrance, which was so fully justified in the sequel, produced no immediate effect in the assembly; the Lacedæmonians finally yielded to the general request of their confederates, and abstained from their intended innovation in the government of a Grecian city.

The dethroned prince, finding his cause universally abandoned by the Greeks, sought the protection of Artaphernes, the Persian governor of Sardes. Having acquired the confidence of this satrap, he represented to him the insolence, ingratitude, and perfidy of his countrymen, and the severest reproaches with which he loaded their character, gained ready belief with the Persian. The Athenians, who were informed of these intrigues, sent ambassadors to Sardes, in order to counteract them; but the resolution of Artaphernes was already taken; and he told the ambassadors, that if they consulted their safety, and would avoid the resentment of Persia, they must reinstate Hippias in the throne of his father. His answer had been reported to the Athenians, and the assembly had finally resolved to oppose the power of the greatest empire upon earth, rather than admit within their walls the declared enemy of their liberties.*

Precisely at this juncture Aristagoras arrived at Athens, announced the revolt of the Asiatic Greeks from the government of Artaphernes, and solicited the assistance of the Athenians, in defending their own colonies against the oppressive violence of the common foe. Many arguments were not necessary to make the people of Athens adopt a measure which gratified their favourite passions. The eloquent Milesian, however, described the wealth and extent of Persia, the grandeur and populousness of its cities, and, above all, the slothful effeminacy and

Artaphernes commands the Athenians to reinstate Hippias. Olymp. lxix. 4. A. C. 501.

Aristagoras arrives in Athens. Olymp. lxx. 1. A. C. 500.

* Herodot. *ibid.* c. xcvi.

pusillanimous weakness of their inhabitants, who, unable to support the ponderous shield, or poise the manly lance, invited, as an easy prey, the victorious arms of a more warlike invader. The speech of Aristagoras was well fitted to excite the ambition and avarice of Athens. The assembly immediately decreed that assistance should be sent to Ionia. Twenty ships were fitted out with all convenient speed, which, reinforced by five more belonging to Eretria, a town of Eubœa, rendezvoused in the harbour of Miletus.*

The Athenians send twenty ships to assist their colonies. Aristagoras spent not long time in his embassy to the other states of Greece, and soon met his Athenian allies at the place appointed. It was here determined, that while the commander in chief regulated the civil affairs of the Ionians, his brother Charopinus should conduct a military expedition against the wealthy capital of Lydia. The Athenians desirous of testifying their resentment against the common enemy, and still more desirous of plunder, eagerly engaged in this undertaking. The united fleets left the harbour of Miletus and sailed to Ephesus, where the troops were disembarked; and, in three days, accomplishing a journey of seventy miles, appeared before the gates of Sardes. The Persian governor little expected such a visit; his soldiers were not prepared to take the field; and the extensive walls of the city could not resist, on all sides, the strength of the besiegers. Artaphernes, therefore, contented himself with defending the citadel; while the Greeks without opposition, entered Sardes, in order to plunder the accumulated wealth of that ancient capital. But an accident prevented them from reaping the fruits of their success. The resentment of a rapacious soldier, disappointed of his prey, set fire to the house of a Lydian, situate on the skirts of the town, which consisted, for the most part, of very combustible materials, the houses being all roofed, and many of them walled with cane; a mode of build-

Measures of the confederates. Olymp. lxx. 1. A. C. 500.

They take and burn Sardes.

* Herodot. l. v. c. xcvi.

ing doubly dangerous in that adust climate. The flames readily communicated from one house to another; and, in a short time, the whole circumference of the place was surrounded with a wall of fire. Sardes was built in the Grecian, not in the eastern fashion,* having, on the banks of the Pactolus, which intersected the town, a spacious square, which commonly served for the market-place.† Thither the Persians, driven from the extremities, betook themselves for refuge against the fury of the flames.

Arms formed part of the dress of Barbarians;‡ Are defeated and the Persians, who had assembled in the square ed in their retreat without any intention of making defence, discovered

their own strength to be more than sufficient to resist the enemy. Meanwhile the flames of Sardes brought the inhabitants from all parts of Lydia to their assistance. The Greeks were attacked, repelled, obliged to abandon their booty; and it was not without much difficulty that they effected their escape. Their retreat from Sardes was still more rapid than their march thither. It then appeared, that the taking and burning of the Lydian capital, was no more than a stroke of military address, which succeeded, because unforeseen, and of which the Greeks had not sufficient strength to avail themselves. The enemy collecting their whole force, pursued them to Ephesus, and defeated them with great slaughter, notwithstanding the vigorous resistance of the Athenians. The Eubœan auxiliaries also behaved with uncommon spirit, headed by their countryman Eualcides, whose Olympic victories had been highly extolled in the verses of Simonides, and whose death on this occasion was long and deeply regretted.

Bad fortune is commonly attended with dissensions in a confederate army. The allies threw the blame on each other, and the Athenians returned home in disgust, determined no longer to endanger|| Subsequent conduct of the confederates.

* We have already observed, that the Persians had not any Forum or place of public resort.

† Herodot. l. v. c. ci. & seq. ‡ Thucyd. in proem. || Herodot. ibid.

themselves for the sake of men who employed so little wisdom or valour in their own defence. The Ionians, though deserted by their allies, and defeated by the enemy at land, carried on the war vigorously by sea. Sailing northwards, they reduced Byzantium, and all the neighbouring cities on the Hellespont, or Propontis. Their fleet then directed its course to Caria, and having become master of the most considerable portion of that coast, defeated the Phœnicians off the isle of Cyprus.

Vigorous
measure of
of the Per-
sians for
crushing
the rebel-
lion.

The military success of the Persians engaged them, on the other hand, to prosecute the war by land; and their subsequent operations discovered such a degree of prudence and courage, as they seem never to have exerted on any future occasion. In order the more speedily to quash the hopes of the insurgents, they formed their numerous army into three divisions, allotting to each its particular department. After these separate brigades had reduced the smaller cities of the Eolians, Dorians and Ionians, the three great branches of the Hellenic race, it was concerted, that they should re-assemble in one body, to attack Miletus, which was regarded as the centre of rebellion; and which, though properly an Ionic city, was considered, on account of its great strength and importance, rather as the metropolis of the whole country, than as the capital of a particular province. This plan so judiciously concerted, was carried into execution by three sons-in-law of Darius, Hymeas, Daurises, and Otanes; the first of whom reduced the Eolian cities; the second conquered the Dorians, as well as the other inhabitants of Caria;* while Otanes, assisted by the counsels and the bravery of Artaphernes, overran the Ionic coast, burning and destroying all before him. The miserable natives were put to the sword, or dragged into captivity; the more fortunate escaped similar calamities, by flying to their ships, or taking refuge within the lofty walls of Miletus.†

* After the conquest seemed complete, Daurises was surprised and slain by Heraclides, a general of the Carians. But this disaster had no effect on the general fortune of the war. Herodot. l. v. c. cvi.

† Herodot. l. v. c. cvi. cvii. & seq.

The time now approached for attacking that place, which, as its harbour commanded the coast, it was necessary to invest by sea and land. We might, on this occasion, expect to find Aristagoras, the prime mover of the rebellion, displaying the fertile resources of his genius; but, before Miletus, was besieged, Aristagoras was no more. The perfidious Ionian who had persuaded, not only his own countrymen, but all the Asiatic, and many of the European Greeks, that the public safety was the sole object of his concern, had never probably any other end in view but the success of his own selfish designs. When Cymé and Clazomené, two neighbouring towns of Ionia, had surrendered to the Persians, he thought it time to provide, by a speedy retreat, for his personal safety; and abandoning, in its greatest need, a country which he had involved in all the calamities of war, he fled, with his numerous partizans, to an obscure corner of Thrace, situated beyond the reach, both of the Persians, from whom he had revolted, and of the Grecians, whom he had betrayed. But while he endeavoured to secure his establishment there, he provoked by his cruelty, the despair of the natives, and together with the companions of his perfidy, perished miserably by the hands of those fierce Barbarians, who thus revenged what happened to be, for once, the common cause of Greece and Persia.*

They besiege Miletus. Olymp. lxxi. 3. A. C. 494. Aristagoras flies to Thrace and is slain there.

About this time, Histæus, the Milesian, the kinsman and friend of Aristagoras, arrived from Susa, commissioned by Darius to direct, by his experienced wisdom and perfect knowledge of the country, the valour and activity of the Persian generals. The birth, the education, the manners of this singular man, together with the strong partiality of every Greek in favour of his native land, might have afforded good reason to the Persian king to suspect his fidelity: he indeed suspected it; but the artful address, the warm professions, the subtle insinuations of Histæus, easily

The intrigues of Histæus

* Herodot. l. v. c. cxxiv. cxxv. cxxvi.

overcame every prejudice which his situation and character made it natural to conceive against him. He was sent to assist the army of Darius, his benefactor, in crushing the Grecian rebellion; but his real intention was to take upon himself the conduct of that rebellion, and to raise his own greatness on the ruins of the Persian power. As he passed to the coast of Asia Minor, his intrigues produced a conspiracy at Sardes, which was discovered by the vigilance of Artaphernes, and occasioned the destruction of his accomplices. Histiaeus made a seasonable retreat to the Ionian shore,* where he hoped to be received with open arms by his ancient friends. But the Milesians, remembering his former tyranny, and the recent baseness of his nephew Aristagoras, shut their gates against him. He sought admission into Chios, but without better success. The Lesbians, with much difficulty lent him eight vessels, which he employed against the enemy in the Euxine; but he was taken by the Persians, and crucified at Sardes, having performed nothing important

His death. towards changing the fortune of a war, which had been undertaken by his advice, and fomented by his ambition.†

The siege of Miletus continued. Meanwhile the Persian fleet and army surrounded the walls of Miletus. We are not informed of the exact number of their land forces, which consisting of all the united garrisons in those parts, must have greatly exceeded any strength which the much exhausted Greeks could bring into the field. Their fleet, composed of Phœnicians, Cilicians, and Egyptians, amounted to six hundred sail; besides a considerable naval force belonging to the isle of Cyprus, which, having co-operated during one year with the Ionian insurgents, had recently submitted to Darius. In order to deliberate concerning the means of opposing this mighty armament, the Grecians assembled in the Panionian council, where it was unanimously resolved, that no attempt should be made to resist the Persians by land: the citizens of Miletus alone were exhorted to defend

The Grecians determine to defend it to the last extremity; and to oppose the enemy by sea.

* Herodot. l. v. c. ii. & seq.

† Herodot. *ibid.*

their walls to the last extremity, under the conduct of Pythagoras, a person of great rank and eminence in their republic. While every effort should be exerted for maintaining this strong hold of Ionia, it was determined that the Grecian fleet, the last and only hope of the nation, should assemble at the small island of Ladé, lying off the harbour of Miletus, and offer battle to that of the Persians.* When all their forces were collected at the appointed rendezvous, they amounted to three hundred and fifty-three ships, which, containing, each at a medium, a complement of above two hundred men, made the whole amount to a number sufficiently respectable, and which, had they all remained firm and unanimous in the common cause, might, perhaps, have still rendered them victorious. Such, at least, was the opinion of the Persian commanders, who, when informed of the strength of the Grecian fleet, despaired of conquering it by open force, and endeavoured to effect by policy, what they could not accomplish by valour. Calling together the Ionian tyrants, who, after being expelled their dominions by Aristagoras, had taken refuge with the Medes and actually followed the standard of Darius, they represented to those banished princes, that now was the time to show their attachment to the service of the great king.

The Persians attempt to disunite them, but without immediate effect.

For this purpose they were instructed, each of them, to persuade by message or a personal interview, the subjects whom he had formerly commanded, to desert the Grecian confederacy; to acquaint them, that if they complied with this proposal, their houses and temples should be spared, while those of their most obstinate allies would be destroyed by the flames; that their republics should be treated with great lenity, and even received into favour, while their countrymen who resisted, would inevitably be reduced into servitude; their youth disgraced by castration; their virgins transported to Bactria, to satisfy the lust of Barbarians; and their country, which contained every thing once dear to them, their temples, their

* Herodot. l. vi. c. vi. & seq.

statues, their oracles, and the tombs of their ancestors, bestowed on some more deserving and less rebellious people.

These insidious representations, however, produced not any immediate effect. Each community, believing that they alone were solicited to abandon the common cause, scorned, on account of their private advantage, to desert the general interest of the confederacy, and next day they called a council of war to consider of the means proper, not for appeasing the wrath, but for resisting the arms, of the Persians.

The advice of Dionysius the Phocæan. In this council, where no distinction of persons prevailed, every individual had full liberty to propose his opinion. That of Dionysius, a Phocæan, met with the approbation of the assembly. "Our fortunes," said he, "O Ionians! stand on a needle's point. We must either vindicate our liberty, or suffer the ignominious punishment of fugitive slaves. If we refuse present labour and danger, we shall be exposed to eternal disgrace; but the toils of a few days will be compensated by a life of freedom, of glory, and of happiness. Submit, therefore, to my direction; and I will pledge my life, that, if the gods declare not against us, the enemy will either decline the engagement, or engaging, be shamefully defeated." The Greeks, consenting to submit to the disciple of Dionysius, he, every day, arranged the fleet in three divisions: towards the east extended the right wing, consisting of eight ships of the Milesians, twelve belonging to Priènè, and three, which formed the whole strength of the small republic of Myus. The centre consisted of an hundred prime sailors, furnished by the Chians, seventy from Lesbos, and a few ships, sent by the little cities of Erythræa, Phocæa, and Teios. The Samians, alone, with sixty sail, formed the left wing to the westward.

His regulations observed for a while; and then discontinued. In ancient times the success of a naval engagement principally depended on the activity of the rowers and the skill of the pilots, whose object it always was to dart, with great violence, the sharp beak or prow of their own ships against the sides of the enemy. Sometimes at one stroke, more frequently by re-

peated assaults, while they themselves, with wonderful dexterity, eluded such a shock, they shattered or sunk the vessel of their opponents. By their continual exercise in navigation, the Greeks had acquired such proficiency in managing their galleys, that their movement depending, not on the external impulse of the wind, but on the active principle within, resembled the rapid motion of a fish in its native element. Constant practice, however, was necessary to maintain this superiority, and still more to preserve their bodies in a capacity for labour, which, on account of the softness of the climate, and the heat of the season, were ready to melt away in sloth and debility. The prudent Phocæan, therefore, commanded them often to change their stations, habituating the sailors to the labour of the oar, and the restraints of discipline, which he assured them would, by habit, become easy and agreeable. For seven days they cheerfully obeyed his commands: but at length the warmth of the season rendered their exertions too great for their strength. Distempers broke out in the fleet. The Greeks, always averse to every shadow of absolute authority, complained at first in secret murmurs, and afterwards in licentious clamours, of the intolerable hardships imposed on them by the severity of an insolent Phocæan, who, though he brought only three ships to the common defence, had assumed an arbitrary direction in all their affairs. Governed by these sentiments, they refused any longer to obey his commands, landed on the shore of Ladé, formed a camp on the island, and sitting under the shade of their tents, disdained the useful labours to which they had hitherto submitted.

The Samians, who saw and dreaded the consequence of this general disorder, privately accepted the proposal which had been made them by the Persians. Their perfidy brought destruction on the common cause; for, in the engagement which followed soon after, they hoisted sail and deserted the line. The Lesbians followed their example. Among those, however, who obtained immortal honour, by adhering to the cause of Greece, were eleven captains of

The Greeks
defeated in
a sea fight.

Samian vessels, who detested the treachery of their companions, and despised the signals of their admirals; on which account they were rewarded, at their return, by the community of Samos, with a pillar and inscription, transmitting their names, with eternal renown, to posterity. But, of all the Greeks, the Chians acquired greatest glory on that memorable day: notwithstanding their inferior strength, they defended themselves to the last extremity, and rendered the victory late

Miletus taken.
Olymp. lxxi. 3.
A. C. 494.
Dispersion of the Greeks, and desolation of their country.

and dear to the Persians. The naval defeat was soon followed by the taking of Miletus, which surrendered in the sixth year from the commencement of the revolt. The Persians made good the threats which they had denounced against the obstinacy of their enemies. Samos alone, at the price of its perfidy, obtained the safety of its houses and temples. Those of all the other communities were burnt to the ground. The women and children were dragged into captivity. Such of the Milesian citizens as escaped not by flight, were either put to the sword, or carried into the heart of Asia, and finally settled in the territory of Ampé, near the mouth of the Tigris. In other places, men of a timid or melancholy complexion continued to brood over the ruins of their ancient seats. The more enterprising sailed to Greece, to the coast of Italy and Sicily, and to the Greek colonies in Africa. Probably not a few betook themselves to piracy, among whom was Dionysius the Phocæan, who plundered the Tuscan and Carthaginian vessels, always sparing the Grecian. The Persian fleet wintered at Miletus, and next spring subdued the islands of Chios, Lesbos, and Tenedos.* Thus were the Asiatic Greeks conquered for the third time, once by the Lydians, and twice by the Persians.

Ionia begins to flourish under the Persian government.

But notwithstanding these repeated shocks, which subjected the inhabitants of Ionia to such dreadful calamities, that delightful country soon recovered its ancient populousness and splendour. The Persian

* Herodot. l. vi. c. xxxi. & seq.

government, having sufficiently punished the rebellion, gradually relented. The Ionians became an object of care and protection to Darius. Useful regulations were made for maintaining the public peace, as well as for securing the lives and properties of individuals. The face of the country began once more to smile; the cities being built of slight materials, were easily repaired, while the exuberant fertility of the soil, the attractive beauties of the prospect, the charms of the climate, and the convenience of the harbours (an advantage of which the Persians knew not how to avail themselves,) speedily collected the Greeks into their ancient habitations. Even those places which had been deserted or destroyed, emerged from the gloom of desolation, and assumed the cheerful appearance of industrious activity. And such was the attachment of the Greeks to their native land, and such their ambition to adorn it, that the labour of a few years repaired the destructive ravages of the Barbarians.

CHAP. IX.

Resentment of Darius against Greece.—Maritime Expedition of Mardonius.—Invasion of Greece by Datis and Artaphernes.—Battle of Marathon.—Transactions in the Interval between that Battle and Xerxes' Invasion.—The Invasion of Xerxes.—Battle of Thermopylæ.

Introduc-
tion to the
history of
the Persian
invasion.

IN attempting to give the reader a general, but tolerably complete, view of the ancient history of Greece, it was often necessary to have recourse to very obscure materials; to arrange and combine the mutilated fragments of poets and mythologists; and to trace, by the established principles of critical conjecture, and the certain, because uniform, current of human passions, those events and transactions which seem most curious and important. In this subsequent part of my work, the difficulty consists, not in discovering, but in selecting, the materials; for the magnificent preparations, the splendid commencement, and the unexpected issue, of the Persian war, have been related with the utmost accuracy of description, and adorned by the brightest charms of eloquence. The Grecian poets, historians, and orators, dwell with complacency on a theme, not less important than extensive, and equally adapted to display their own abilities, and to flatter the pride of their country. The variety of their inimitable performances, generally known and studied in every country conversant with literature, renders the subject familiar to the reader, and difficult to the writer. Yet does the merit of those performances, however justly and universally admired, fall short of the extraordinary exploits which they describe; exploits which, though ancient, still preserve a fresh and unfading lustre, and will remain to the latest ages, precious monuments of that generous magna-

nimity, which cherishes the seeds of virtue, inspires the love of liberty, and animates the fire of patriotism.

The memorable tragedy (to adopt on this occasion an apt allusion of Plutarch,) which ended in the eternal disgrace of the Persian name, may be divided, with propriety, into three principal acts. The first contains the invasion of Greece by Darius' generals, Datis and Artaphernes, who were defeated in the battle of Marathon. The second consists in the expedition, undertaken ten years afterwards by Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius, who fled precipitately from Greece, after the ruin of his fleet near the isle of Salamis. The third, and concluding act, is the destruction of the Persian armies in the bloody fields of Mycalé and Platea; events concurring on the same day, and which happened nearly two years after Xerxes' triumphal entry into Greece.

Subject divided into three acts.

Olymp. lxxii. 3.
A. C. 490.

Olymp. lxxv. 1.
A. C. 480.

Olymp. lxxv. 2.
A. C. 479.

The complete reduction of the insurgents on the Asiatic coast, prompted Darius to take vengeance on such Greeks as had encouraged and assisted the unsuccessful rebellion of his subjects. The proud monarch of the East, when informed that the citizens of Athens had co-operated with the Ionians in the taking and burning of Sardes, discovered evident marks of the most furious resentment: shooting an arrow into the air, he prayed that heaven might assist him in punishing the audacious insolence of that republic; and every time he sat down to table, an attendant reminded him of the Athenians, lest the delights of eastern luxury should seduce him from his fell purpose of revenge.*

Darius' resentment against the Athenians.

The execution of his design was intrusted to Mardonius, a Persian nobleman of the first rank, whose personal as well as hereditary advantages, had entitled him to the marriage of Artazostra daughter of Darius; and whose youth and inexperience were compensated, in the opinion of his master, by his

Unfortunate expedition of Mardonius; Olymp. lxxi. 4.
A. C. 493.

* Herodot. l. v. c. cv. & seq.

superior genius for war, and innate love of glory. In the second Spring after the cruel punishment of the Ionians, Mardonius approached the European coast with an armament sufficient to inspire terror into Greece. The rich island of Thasus, whose golden mines are said to have yielded a revenue of nearly three hundred talents, submitted to his fleet; while his land forces added the barbarous province of Macedonia to the Persian empire. But having steered southward

from Thasus, the whole armament was overtaken by a storm, and almost wholly destroyed, while endeavouring to double the promontory of mount Athos, which is connected with the Macedonian shore by a low and narrow neck of land, but forms a long and lofty ridge in the sea. Three hundred vessels were dashed against the rocks; twenty thousand men perished in the waves. This disaster totally defeated the design of the expedition: and Mardonius, having recovered the shattered remains of the fleet and army, returned to the court of Persia, where, by flattering the pride, he averted the resentment of Darius; while he represented, that the Persian forces, invincible by the power of man, had yielded to the fury of the elements; and while he described and exaggerated, to the astonishment and terror of his countrymen, the excessive cold, the violent tempests, the monstrous marine animals, which distinguished and rendered formidable those distant and unknown seas.*

The address of Mardonius rescued him from punishment; but his misfortunes removed him from the command of Lower Asia. Two generals were appointed in his room, of whom Datis, a Mede, was the more distinguished by his age and experience, while Artaphernes, a Persian, was the more conspicuous for his rank and nobility, being descended of the royal blood, and son to Artaphernes, governor of Sardes, whose name has frequently occurred in the present history. That his lieutenants might appear with a degree of splendour

Succeeded
by Datis and
Artapher-
nes.
Olymp.
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* Herodot. l. vi. c. xliii. & seq.

suitable to the majesty of Persia, Darius assembled an army of five hundred thousand men.* consisting of the flower of the provincial troops of his extensive empire. The preparation of an adequate number of transports and ships of war, occasioned but a short delay. The maritime provinces of the empire, Egypt, Phœnicia, and the coasts of the Euxine and Ægæan seas, were commanded to fit out, with all possible expedition, their whole naval strength: the old vessels were repaired, many new ones were built, and in the course of the same year in which the preparations commenced, a fleet of six hundred sail was ready to put to sea. This immense armament the Persian generals were ordered to employ in extending their conquests on the side of Europe, in subduing the republics of Greece, and more particularly in chastising the insolence of the Eretrians and Athenians, the only nations which had conspired with the revolt of the Ionians, and assisted that rebellious people in the destruction of Sardes. With respect to the other nations which might be reduced by his arms, the orders of Darius were general, and the particular treatment of the vanquished was left to the discretion of his lieutenants; but concerning the Athenians and Eretrians, he gave the most positive commands, that their territories should be laid waste, their houses and temples burned or demolished, and their persons carried into captivity to the eastern extremities of his empire. Secure of effecting their purpose, his generals were furnished with a great number of chains for confining the Grecian prisoners; a haughty presumption (to use the language of antiquity) in the superiority of a man over the power of fortune, which on this, as on other occasions, was punished by the just vengeance of heaven.

The Persian fleet enjoyed a prosperous voyage to the isle of Samos, from whence they were ready to proceed to the Athenian coast. The late disaster which befel the armament commanded by Mardonius, deterred

* Besides Herodotus, Plutarch, and Diodorus Siculus, this expedition is related by Lysias, Orat. Funeb. Isocrat. Panegy. Plato. Menex. Pausan. l. x. c. xx. Justin. l. ii. c. ix. Corn. Nepos, in Milt.

them from pursuing a direct course along the shores of Thrace and Macedonia: they determined to steer in an oblique line through the Cyclades, a cluster of seventeen small islands, lying opposite to the territories of Argos and Attica. The approach of such an innumerable host, whose transports darkened the broad surface of the Ægæan, struck terror into the unwarlike inhabitants of those delightful islands. The Naxians took refuge in their inaccessible mountains; the natives of Delos, the favourite residence of Latona and her divine children, abandoned the awful majesty of their temple, which was overshadowed by the rough and lofty mount Cynthus. Paros,* famous for its marble; Andros,† celebrated for its vines; Ceos, the birth-place of the plaintive Simonides; Syros, the native country of the ingenious and philosophic Pherecydes; Ios, the tomb of Homer;‡ the industrious Amorgos;§ as well as all the other¶ islands which surrounded the once sacred shores of Delos, either spontaneously offered the usual acknowledgment of earth and water, as a testimony of their friendship, or submitted, after a feeble resistance, to the Persian arms.¶

* The marble of Paros was superior in whiteness, and the fineness of its grain, to the hard sparkling veins of Mount Pentelicus in Attica: which, from the size and brilliancy of its component particles, somewhat resembling salt, is called by the Italians *marmo salino*. These two kinds of marble were always the most valued by the Greeks; but the marble of Paros was preferred by artists, as yielding more easily to the graving-tool, and on account of the homogeneousness of its parts, less apt to sparkle, and give false lights to the statue. The works of Parian marble, in the Farnesian palace at Rome, are mentioned by Winkelman, *Geschichtender kunst des Alterthums*, l. i. c. 2.

† The wines of Andros, and Naxos were compared to nectar. See Athenæus, l. i.

‡ Strabo, l. x. & Plin. l. iv. Pausanias (in Phocic.) says, that Climenæ, the mother of Homer, was a native of the isle of Ios; and Aulus Gellius, l. iii. asserts, on the authority of Aristotle, that this island was the birth-place of Homer himself.

§ Amorgos was long famous for the robes made there, and distinguished by its name. Suid. ad voc. They were dyed red, with a species of lichen which abounds in that island, and which was formerly used by the English and French in dying scarlet.

¶ Herodot. l. vi. c. 94.

¶ Herodot. l. vi. c. 101. and seq.

The invaders next proceeded westward to the isle of Eubœa, where, after almost a continued engagement of six days, their strength and numbers, assisted by the perfidy of two traitors, finally prevailed over the valour and obstinacy of the Eretrians.*

They recover Eubœa.

Hitherto every thing was prosperous ; and had the expedition ended with the events already related, it would have afforded to the great king just matter of triumph. But a more difficult task remained, in the execution of which the Persians (happily for Europe) experienced a fatal reverse of fortune. After the reduction of Eubœa, the Athenian coasts, separated from that island only by the narrow strait of Euripus, seemed to invite the generals of Darius to an easy conquest. They readily accepted the invitation, as the punishment of Athens was the main object which their master had in view when he fitted out his seemingly invincible armament. The measures which they adopted for accomplishing this design appear abundantly judicious ; the greater part of the army was left to guard the islands which they had subdued ; the useless multitude of attendants were transported to the coast of Asia ; with an hundred thousand chosen infantry, and a due proportion of horse, the Persian generals set sail from Eubœa, and safely arrived on the *Marathonian shore*, a district of Attica about thirty miles from the capital, consisting chiefly of level ground, and therefore admitting the operations of cavalry, which formed the main strength of the Barbarian army, and with which the Greeks were very poorly provided. Here the Persians pitched their camp, by the advice of Hippias, the banished king of Athens,† whose perfect knowledge of the country, and intimate acquaintance with the

Invade Attica.

* The present deplorable state of these once fortunate islands may be seen in Tournefort, the most learned of travellers. Despotism, a double superstition (the Grecian and Mahomedan,) pirates, banditti, and pestilence, have not yet depopulated the Cyclades, which respectively contain three, five, ten, and the largest twenty thousand inhabitants.

† Thucyd. l. vi. c. lix. Herodot. ubi supra.

affairs of Greece, rendered his opinion on all occasions respectable.

The Athenians take measures for their defence. Meanwhile the Athenians had raised an army, and appointed ten generals, with equal power, chosen, as usual, from the ten tribes; into which the citizens were divided. Their obstinate and almost constant hostilities with the Phocians, the Thebans, and their other northern neighbours, prevented them from entertaining any hopes of assistance from that quarter; but, on the first appearance of the Persian fleet they sent a messenger to Sparta, to acquaint the senate of that republic with the immediate danger that threatened them, and to explain how much it concerned the interest as well as the honour of the Spartans who had acquired just pre-eminence among the Grecian states, not to permit the destruction of the most ancient and the most splendid of the Grecian cities. The senate and assembly approved the justice of this demand: they collected their troops, and seemed ready to afford their rivals, whose danger now converted them into allies, a speedy and effectual relief. But it was only the ninth day of the month; and an ancient, unaccountable, and therefore the more respected, superstition prevented the Spartans from taking the field, before the full of the moon.* When that period should arrive, they promised to march, with the utmost expedition, to the plains of Marathon.

Reinforced by the Platæans. Meanwhile the Athenians had been reinforced by a thousand chosen warriors from Platæa, a small city of Bœotia, distant only nine miles from Thebes. The independent spirit of the Platæans rendered them as desirous of preserving their freedom, as they were unable to defend it against the Theban power. But that invaluable possession, which their own weakness would have made it necessary for them to surrender, the protection of Athens enabled them to maintain, and in return for this inestimable favour, they discovered towards their benefactors, on the present

* Strabo, l. ix. p. 611: and Herodot. *ibid.*

as well as on every future occasion, the sincerest proofs of gratitude and respect. The Athenian army, now ready to take the field, consisted of about ten thousand freemen, and of probably a still greater number of armed slaves. The generals might certainly have collected a larger body of troops; but they seem to have been averse to commit the safety of the state to the fortune of a single engagement; neither would it have been prudent to leave the walls of Athens, and the other fortresses of Attica, altogether naked and defenceless. It had been a matter of deliberation in the assembly, whether they ought not to stand a siege rather than venture a battle. The Athenian fortifications, indeed, had not attained that strength which they afterwards acquired, yet they might have long resisted the artless assaults of the Persians; or had the latter got possession of the walls, the long, narrow, and winding streets* of Athens would have enabled a small number of men to make an obstinate, and perhaps a successful defence, against a superior but less determined enemy. But all hopes from this mode of resistance were damped by the consideration, that an immense host of Persians might surround their city on every side, intercept their supplies, and, instead of conquering them by assault, reduce them by famine. At the same time Miltiades, one of the ten generals, whose patriotism and love of liberty we have already had occasion to applaud, animated his countrymen with the desire of victory and glory. This experienced commander knew the Persians; he knew his fellow citizens; and his discerning sagacity had formed a proper estimate of both.

The Athenians encouraged by Miltiades to risk a battle.

The Athenians were few in number, but chosen men; their daily practice in the gymnastic had given them agility of limbs, dexterity of hand, and an unusual degree of vigour both of mind and body. Their constant exercise in war had inured them to

His motives explained in the military character of the Athenians,

* Aristotle informs us, that this was the ancient mode of building in all the cities of Greece. ARISTOT. Polit.

hardship and fatigue, accustomed them to the useful restraints of discipline, and familiarized them to those skilful evolutions, which commonly decide the fortune of the field. Their defensive as well as offensive armour was remarkably complete; and an acknowledged pre-eminence over their neighbours, had inspired them with a military enthusiasm, which on this occasion was doubly animated, in defence of their freedom and of their country. In their pertinacious struggles with each other, for whatever men hold most precious, the Greeks, and the Athenians in particular, had adopted a mode of military arrangement which cannot be too highly extolled. Drawn up in a close and firm phalanx, commonly sixteen deep, the impetuous vigour of the most robust youth held the first ranks; the last were closed by the steady courage of experienced veterans, whose resentment against cowardice seemed more terrible to their companions than the arms of an enemy. As the safety of the last ranks depended on the activity of the first, their united assaults were rendered alike furious and persevering, and hardly to be resisted by any superiority of numbers.*

* The attention given by the Greeks to the relative disposition of the ranks, according to the respective qualities of the men who composed them, introduced certain rules in ancient tactics, which would be unnecessary in the modern. To convert the rear into the front, a modern army has only to face about, because it is not very material in what order the ranks are placed. But we learn from the tactics of Arrian, that the Greeks had contrived three other ways of attaining this purpose, in all of which the same front was uniformly presented to the enemy.—The first was called the *Macedonian*. In this evolution the file-leader faced to the right about, without stirring from his place; the other men in the file passed behind him, and, after a certain number of paces, also faced about, and found themselves in their respective places.—The second was called the *Cretan*. In this the file-leader not only faced about, but paced over the depth of the phalanx. The rest followed him, and the whole found themselves in the same place as before, the ranks only reversed.—The third was called the *Lacedæmonian*, which was precisely the opposite of the first. In the Lacedæmonian evolution the bringer-up, or last man in each file, whom the Greeks called *οπισθος*, faced about, then halted. The file-leader faced about, and paced over twice the depth of the phalanx, the rest following him; the whole thus found themselves with the same front towards the en-

The Persians (for under the name of Persians are ^{and of the} comprehended the various nations which followed Persians. the standard of Datis and Artaphernes) were not deficient in martial appearance, nor perhaps entirely destitute of valour, being selected with care from the flower of the Asiatic provinces. But, compared with the regularity of the Greek battalions, they may be regarded as a promiscuous crowd, armed in each division with the peculiar weapons of their respective countries, incapable of being harmonized by general movements, or united into any uniform system of military arrangement. Darts and arrows were their usual instruments of attack; and even the most completely armed trusted to some species of missile weapon. They carried in their left hands light targets of reed or osier, and their bodies were sometimes covered with thin plates of scaly metal; but they had not any defensive armour worthy of being compared with the firm corslets, the brazen greaves, the massy bucklers of their Athenian opponents. The bravest of the barbarians fought on horseback; but in all ages the long Grecian spear has proved the surest defence against the attack of cavalry, inso-much that even the Romans, in fighting against the Numidian horsemen, preferred the strength of the phalanx to the activity of the legion. The inferiority of their armour and of their discipline, was not the only defect of the Persians: they wanted that ardour and emulation, which, in the close and desperate engagements of ancient times, were necessary to animate the courage of a soldier. Their spirits were broken under the yoke of a double servitude, imposed by the blind superstition

emy, the ranks only reversed. The difference between these three evolutions consisted in this, that the Macedonian, where the file-leader stood still, and the rest went behind him, had the appearance of a retreat; since the whole line receded by the depth of the phalanx from the enemy: in the Cretan, the men preserved the same ground which they had originally occupied; but the Lacedæmonian carried the whole line, by the depth of the phalanx, forward on the enemy. Among the first military changes introduced by Philip of Macedon, historians mention his adoption of the Lacedæmonian evolution, for changing the front, in preference to that formerly used by his own countrymen.

of the Magi, and the capricious tyranny of Darius; with them their native country was an empty name; and their minds, degraded by the mean vices of wealth and luxury, were insensible to the native charms, as well as the immortal reward of manly virtue.

Prudent conduct of Miltiades. Miltiades allowed not, however, his contempt of the enemy, or his confidence in his own troops, to seduce him into a fatal security. Nothing on his part was neglected; and the only obstacle to success was fortunately removed by the disinterested moderation of his colleagues. The continual dread of tyrants had taught the jealous republicans of Greece to blend, on every occasion, their civil with their military institutions. Governed by this principle, the Athenians, as we already had occasion to observe, elected ten generals, who were invested, each in his turn, with the supreme command. This regulation was extremely unfavourable to that unity of design which ought to pervade all the connected operations of an army; an inconvenience which struck the discerning mind of Aristides, who on this occasion displayed the first openings of his illustrious character. The

Generous patriotism of Aristides. day approaching when it belonged to him to assume the successive command, he generously yielded his authority* to the approved valour and experience of Miltiades. The other generals followed this magnanimous example, sacrificing the dictates of private ambition to the interest and glory of their country; and the commander in chief thus enjoyed an opportunity of exerting, uncontrolled, the utmost vigour of his genius.

Disposition of both armies. Lest he should be surrounded by a superior force, he chose for his camp the declivity of a hill distant about a mile from the encampment of the enemy. The intermediate space he caused to be strewed in the night with the branches and trunks of trees, in order to interrupt the motion, and break the order of the Persian cavalry, which in consequence of this precaution, seem to have been rendered

* Plutarch. in Aristid. tom. ii. p. 489.

incapable of acting in the engagement. In the morning his troops were drawn up in battle array, in a long and full line; the bravest of the Athenians on the right, on the left the warriors of Platæa, and in the middle the slaves,* who had been admitted on this occasion to the honour of bearing arms. By weakening his centre, the least valuable part, he extended his front equal to that of the enemy: his rear was defended by the hill above mentioned, which, verging round to meet the sea, likewise covered his right; his left was flanked by a lake or marsh. Datis, although he perceived the skilful disposition of the Greeks, was yet too confident in the vast superiority of his numbers to decline the engagement, especially as he now enjoyed an opportunity of deciding the contest before the enemy's reinforcements could arrive from Peloponnesus. When the Athenians saw their adversaries in motion, they ran down the hill with unusual ardour, to encounter them; a circumstance which proceeded, perhaps from their eagerness to engage, but which must have been attended with the good consequence of shortening the time of their exposure to the slings and darts of the barbarians.

The two armies closed; the battle was rather fierce than obstinate. The Persian sword and Scythian hatchet penetrated, or cut down, the centre of the Athenians; but the two wings, which composed the main strength of the Grecian army, broke, routed, and put to flight the corresponding divisions of the enemy. Instead of pursuing the vanquished, they closed their extremities, and attacked the barbarians who had penetrated their centre. The Grecian spear overcame all opposition; the bravest of the Persians perished in the field; the remainder were pursued with great slaughter; and such was their terror and surprise, that they sought for refuge, not in

Defeat of
the Per-
sians in the
battle of
Marathon:
Olymp.
lxxii. 3.
A. C. 490.

* There is not any historian, indeed, who makes mention of this arrangement, although, by comparing the accounts of the havoc made in the centre, with the small number of Athenian citizens who were slain, it is evident that the slaves must have been the greatest sufferers in the action, and therefore posted as is said in the text.

their camp, but in their ships. The banished tyrant of Athens fell in the engagement: two Athenian generals, and about two hundred citizens, were found among the slain: the Persians left six thousand of their best troops on the scene of action. Probably, a still greater number were killed in the pursuit. The Greeks followed them to the shore; but the lightness of the barbarian armour favoured their escape. Seven ships who sail to Asia were taken; the rest sailed with a favourable gale, doubled the cape of Sunium; and, after a fruitless attempt to surprise the harbour of Athens, returned to the coast of Asia.*

Unexpected treatment of the Eretrians. The loss and disgrace of the Persians on this memorable occasion, was compensated by only one consolation. They had been defeated in the engagement, compelled to abandon their camp, and driven ignominiously to their ships; but they carried with them to Asia the Eretrian prisoners, who in obedience to the orders of Darius, were safely conducted to Susa. These unhappy men had every reason to dread being made the victims of royal resentment; but when they were conducted in chains to the presence of the great king, their reception was very different from what their fears naturally led them to expect. Whether reflection suggested to Darius the pleasure which he might derive in peace, and the assistance which he might receive in war, from the arts and arms of the Eretrians, or that a ray of magnanimity for once enlightened the soul of a despot, he ordered the Greeks to be immediately released from captivity, and soon afterwards assigned them for their habitation the fertile district of Anderica, lying in the province of Cissia in Susiana, at the distance of only forty miles from the capital. There the colony remained in the time of Herodotus, preserving their Grecian language and institutions; and after a revolution of six centuries, their descendants were visited by Apollonius Tyaneus,† the celebrated Pythagorean philosopher,

* Herodot. l. vi. c. cxi. & seq.

† Philostrat. in Vit. Apollon.

and were still distinguished from the surrounding nations by the indubitable marks of European extraction.

When any disaster befel the Persian arms, the great, and once independent, powers of the empire were ever ready to revolt. The necessity of watching the first symptoms of those formidable rebellions gradually drew the troops of Darius from the coast of Lesser Asia; whose inhabitants, delivered from the oppression of foreign mercenaries, resumed their wonted spirit and activity; and except in paying,* conjunctly with several neighbouring provinces, an annual contribution of about an hundred thousand pounds, the Asiatic Greeks were scarcely subjected to any proof of dependence. Disputes concerning the succession to the universal empire of the East, the revolt of Egypt, and the death of Darius, retarded for ten years the resolution formed by that prince, and adopted by his son and successor Xerxes, of restoring the lustre of the Persian arms, not only by taking vengeance on the pertinacious obstinacy of the Athenians, but by effecting the complete conquest of Europe.* We shall presently have occasion to describe the immense preparations which were made for this purpose; but it is necessary first to examine the transactions of the Greeks during the important interval between the battle of Marathon and the expedition of Xerxes; and to explain the principal circumstances which enabled a country, neither wealthy nor populous, to resist the most formidable invasion recorded in history.

The joy excited among the Athenians by a victory, which not only delivered them from the dread of their enemies, but raised them to distinguished pre-eminence among their rivals and allies, is evident from a remarkable incident which happened immediately after the battle. As soon as fortune had visibly declared in their favour, a soldier was despatched from the army to convey the welcome news to the capital. He ran with incredible velocity, and appeared, cover-

Obstacles to the second invasion of Greece.

The sentiments and behaviour of the Athenians in consequence of their victory.

* Herodot. l. vii. c. i. & ii.

ed with dust and blood, in the presence of the senators. Excess of fatigue conspired with the transports of enthusiasm to exhaust the vigour of his frame. He had only time to exclaim in two words, *Rejoice with the victors*,* and immediately expired.

It is probable that the same spirit which animated this nameless patriot, was speedily diffused through the whole community; and the Athenian institutions were well calculated to keep alive the generous ardour which success had inspired. Part of the spoil was gratefully dedicated to the gods; the remainder was appropriated as the just reward of merit. The obsequies of the dead were celebrated with solemn pomp; and, according to an ancient and sacred custom, their fame was commemorated by annual returns of festive magnificence.† The honours bestowed on those who had fallen in the field, reflected additional lustre on their companions who survived the victory. In extensive kingdoms, the praise of successful valour is weakened by diffusion; and such too is the inequality between the dignity of the general and the meanness of the soldier, that the latter can seldom hope to attain, however well he may deserve, his just proportion of military fame.‡ But the Grecian republics were small; a perpetual rivalry subsisted among them; and when any particular state eclipsed the glory of its neighbours, the superiority was sensibly felt by every member of the commonwealth.

Honours
bestowed
on Miltia-
des.

That pre-eminence, which by the battle of Marathon, Athens acquired in Greece, Miltiades, by his peculiar merit in this battle, attained in Athens. His valour and conduct were celebrated by the artless praises of the vulgar, as well as by the more elaborate encomiums of

* *Χαίρετε, χαίρομεν.*

† Diodor. Sic. l. xi. Herodot. ubi supra.

‡ Plutarch. in Cimon. p. 187. & Æschin. advers. Ctesiphont. p. 301, furnish us with examples of the jealousy of the Greeks, lest the fame due to their troops in general should be engrossed by the commanders.

the learned. Before the æra of this celebrated engagement, tragedy, the unrivalled distinction of Athenian literature, had been invented and cultivated by the successful labours of Thespis, Phrynicus, and Æschylus. The last, who is justly regarded as the great improver of the Grecian drama, displayed in the battle of Marathon the same martial ardour which still breathes in his poetry. We may reasonably imagine, that he would employ the highest flights of his fancy in extolling the glory of exploits in which he had himself borne so distinguished a part; and particularly that he would exert all the powers of his lofty genius in celebrating the hero and patriot, whose enthusiasm had animated the battle, and whose superior talents had insured the victory. The name of the conqueror at Marathon re-echoed through the spacious theatres of Athens, which, though they did not yet display that solid and durable construction still discernible in the ruins of ancient grandeur, were already built in a form sufficiently capacious to contain the largest proportion of the citizens. The magnificent encomiums bestowed on Miltiades in the presence of his assembled countrymen, by whose consenting voice they were repeated and approved, fired with emulation the young candidates for fame, while they enabled the general to obtain that mark of public confidence and esteem which was the utmost ambition of all the Grecian leaders.

These leaders, while they remained within the territories of their respective states, were intrusted (as we already had occasion to observe,) with only that moderate authority which suited the equal condition of freedom. But when they were appointed to the command of the fleet in foreign parts, they obtained almost unlimited power, and might acquire immense riches. To this exalted station Miltiades was advanced by the general suffrage of his country; and having sailed with a fleet of seventy galleys, the whole naval strength of the republic, he determined to expel the Persian garrisons from the isles of the Ægean; to reduce the smaller communities to the obedience of Athens, and to subject the more wealthy and powerful to heavy contributions.

Miltiades
appointed
to command
the fleet.

Besieges
Paros un-
success-
fully.

The first operations of the Athenian armament were crowned with success: several islands were subdued, considerable sums of money were collected. But the fleet arriving before Paros, every thing proved adverse to the Athenians. Miltiades, who had received a personal injury from Tisagoras, a man of great authority in that island, yielded to the dictates of private resentment, and confounding the innocent with the guilty, demanded from the Parians the sum of an hundred talents (near twenty thousand pounds sterling.) If the money were not immediately paid, he threatened to lay waste their territory, to burn their city, and to teach them by cruel experience the stern rights of a conqueror. The exorbitancy of the demand rendered compliance with it impossible; the Parians prepared for their defence, guided however by the motives of a generous despair, rather than by any well-grounded hope of resisting the invaders. For twenty-six days they maintained possession of the capital of the island, which the Athenians, after ravaging all the adjacent country, besieged by sea and land. The time now approached when Paros must have surrendered to a superior force; but it was the good fortune of the islanders, that an extensive grove, which happened to be set on fire in one of the Sporades, was believed by the besiegers to indicate the approach of a Persian fleet. The same opinion gained ground among the Parians, who determined, by their utmost efforts, to preserve the place, until they should be relieved by the assistance of their protectors. Miltiades had received a dangerous wound during the siege; and the weakness of his body impairing the faculties of his mind, and rendering him too sensible to the impressions of fear, he gave orders to draw off his victorious troops, and returned with the whole fleet to Athens.

Accused by
his ene-
mies.

His conduct in the present expedition ill corresponded to his former fame; and he soon experienced the instability of popular favour. The Athenian citizens, and particularly the more eminent and illustrious, had universally their rivals and enemies. The competitions for civil offices, or military command, occasioned eternal ani-

mosities among those jealous republicans. Xantippus, a person of great distinction, and father of the celebrated Pericles, who, in the succeeding age obtained the first rank in the Athenian government, eagerly seized an opportunity for depressing the character of a man which had so long overtopped that of every competitor. Miltiades was accused of being corrupted by a Persian bribe to raise the siege of Paros: the precipitancy with which he abandoned the place, so unlike to the general firmness of his manly behaviour, gave a probable colour to the accusation: and the continual terror which, ever since the usurpation of Pisistratus, the Athenians entertained of arbitrary power, disposed them to condemn upon very slight evidence, a man whose abilities and renown seemed to endanger the safety of the commonwealth. The crime laid to his charge inferred death, a punishment which his accuser insisted ought to be immediately inflicted on him. But ^{His death.} his judges were contented with fining him the sum of fifty talents, (near ten thousand pounds sterling,) which being unable to pay, he was thrown into prison, where he soon after died of his wounds.

But the glory of Miltiades survived him; and the Athenians, however unjust to his person, were not unmindful of his fame. At the distance of half ^{Honours bestowed on his memory.} a century, when the battle of Marathon was painted by order of the state, they directed the figure of Miltiades to be placed in the fore-ground, animating the troops to victory: a reward which, during the virtuous simplicity of the ancient commonwealth, conferred more real honour, than all that magnificent profusion of crowns and statues,* which in the later times of the republic, were rather extorted from general fear, than bestowed by public admiration.

The jealousies, resentments, dangers, and calamities, which often attend power and pre-eminence, ^{His successors in command.} have never yet proved sufficient to deter an ambitious mind from the pursuit of greatness. The rivals of Mil-

* Æschin. p. 301. and Polybius passim.

tiades were animated by the glory of his elevation, not depressed by the example of his fall. His accuser Xantippus, though he had acted the principal part in removing this favourite of the people, was not deemed worthy to succeed him. Two candidates appeared for the public confidence and esteem, who alternately outstripped each other in the race of ambition, and whose characters deserve attention even in general history, as they had a powerful influence on the fortune, not of Athens only, but of all Greece.

Comparison of Aristides and Themistocles. Aristides and Themistocles were nearly of the same age, and equally noble, being born in the first rank of citizens, though not of royal descent, like Solon and Pisistratus, Isagoras and Clisthenes, Xantippus and Miltiades, who had hitherto successively assumed the chief administration of the Athenian republic. Both had been named among the generals who commanded in the battle of Marathon. The disinterested behaviour of Aristides on this memorable occasion has already been mentioned. It afforded a promise of his future fame. But his dawning glories were still eclipsed by the meridian lustre of Miltiades. After the death of this great man, Aristides ought naturally to have succeeded to his influence, being pre-eminently distinguished by valour and moderation, the two great virtues of a republican. Formed in such schools of moral and political knowledge as then flourished in Athens, he had learned to prefer glory to pleasure; the interest of his country to his own personal glory; and the dictates of justice and humanity, even to the interests of his country. His ambition was rather to deserve, than to acquire the admiration of his fellow-citizens; and while he enjoyed the inward satisfaction, he was little anxious about the external rewards of virtue. The character of Themistocles was of a more doubtful kind. The trophy, which Miltiades had raised at Marathon, disturbed his rest. He was inflamed with a desire to emulate the glory of this exploit; and while he enabled Athens to maintain a superiority in Greece, he was ambitious to acquire for himself a superiority in Athens. His talents were well adapted to accomplish

both these purposes : eloquent, active, enterprising, he had strengthened his natural endowments by all the force of education and habit. Laws, government, revenue, and arms, every branch of political and military knowledge, were great objects of his study. In the courts of justice he successfully displayed his abilities in defence of his private friends or in accusing the enemies of the state. He was forward to give his opinion upon every matter of public deliberation ; and his advice, founded in wisdom, and supported by eloquence, commonly prevailed in the assembly. Yet with all these great qualities, his mind was less smitten with the native charms of virtue, than captivated with her splendid ornaments. Glory was the idol which he adored. He could injure, without remorse, the general cause of the confederacy, in order to promote the grandeur of Athens ;* and history still leaves it as doubtful, as did his own conduct, whether, had an opportunity offered, he would not have sacrificed the happiness of his country to his private interest and ambition.

The discernment of Aristides perceived the danger of allowing a man of such equivocal merit to be intrusted with the sole government of the republic ; and on this account, rather than from any motives of personal animosity, he opposed every measure that might contribute to his elevation. In this patriotic view, he frequently solicited the same honours which were ambitiously courted by Themistocles, especially when no other candidate appeared capable of balancing the credit of the latter. A rivalry thus began, and long continued between them ;† and the whole people of Athens could alone decide the much contested pre-eminence. The interest of Themistocles so far prevailed over the authority of his opponent, that he procured his own nomination to the command of the fleet ; with which he effected the conquest of the small islands in the Ægean, and thus completed the design undertaken by Miltiades. While he acquired fame and

* Plutarch, in Themistocle & Aristide.

† Plutarch, *ibid.* Herodot. l. viii. c. lxxix.

fortune abroad, Aristides increased his popularity at home. The opposition to his power, arising from the splendid eloquence and popular manners of his rival, was now fortunately removed, and he became the chief leader of the people. His opinion gave law to the courts of justice, or rather such was the effect of his equity and discernment, he alone became sovereign umpire in Athens. In all important differences he was chosen arbitrator, and the ordinary judges were deprived of the dignity and advantages formerly resulting from their office. This consequence of his authority, offending the pride of the Athenian magistrates, was sufficient to excite their resentment, which, of itself, might have effected the ruin of any individual.

Aristides
banished.
Olymp.
lxxiii. 3.
A. C. 486.

But their views on this occasion were powerfully promoted by the triumphant return of Themistocles from his naval expedition. The admiral had acquired considerable riches; but wealth he despised, except as an instrument of ambition. The spoils of the conquered islanders were profusely lavished in shows, festivals, dances, and theatrical entertainments, exhibited for the public amusement. His generous manners and flowing affability were contrasted with the stern dignity of his rival; and the result of the comparison added great force to his insinuation, that, since his own necessary absence in the service of the republic, Aristides had acquired a degree of influence inconsistent with the constitution, and, by arrogating to himself an universal and unexampled jurisdiction in the state, had established a silent tyranny, without pomp or guards, over the minds of his fellow-citizens. Aristides, trusting to the innocence and integrity of his own heart, disdained to employ any unworthy means, either for gaining the favour, or for averting the resentment, of the multitude. The contest, therefore, ended in his banishment for ten years, by a law entitled the Ostracism, (from the name of the materials* on which the votes were marked,) by which the majority of the Athenian assembly

* Οστρακον, a shell.

might expel any citizen, however inoffensive or meritorious had been his past conduct, who by his present power and greatness, seemed capable of disturbing the equality of republican government. This singular institution, which had been established soon after the Athenians had delivered themselves from the tyranny of Hippias, the son of Pisistratus, was evidently intended to prevent any person in future from attaining the same unlawful authority. At Athens, even virtue was proscribed, when it seemed to endanger the public freedom; and only four years after the battle of Marathon, in which he had displayed equal valour and wisdom, Aristides, the justest and most respectable of the Greeks, became the victim of popular jealousy;* an example of cruel rigour, which will for ever brand the spirit of democratical policy.

The banishment of Aristides exposed the Athenians, still more than formerly, to the danger which they hoped to avoid by this severe measure. The removal of such a formidable opponent enabled Themistocles to govern without control. Army, navy, and revenue, all were submitted to his direction. It happened, indeed, most fortunately for the fame of this great man, as well as for the liberty of Athens, that his active ambition was called to the glorious task of subduing the enemies of his country. The smaller islands in the Ægæan were already reduced to obedience, but the possession of them was uncertain while the fleet of Ægina covered the sea and bid defiance to that of the Athenians. This small island, or rather this rock, inhabited time immemorial by merchants and pirates, and situate in the Saronic Gulf, which divides the territories of Attica from the northern shores of Peloponnesus, was a formidable enemy to the republic; the jealousy of commerce and naval power embittered mutual animosity; and as the inhabitants of Ægina, who were governed by a few leading men, had entered into an alliance with the Persians, there was every circum-

The great
ascendant
acquired by
Themisto-
cles.

* Plutarch. & Herodot. *ibid.*

stance united which could provoke to the utmost the hatred and resentment of the Athenians.

Themistocles persuades the Athenians to augment their navy. A motive less powerful than the excess of republican antipathy could not probably have prevailed on them to embrace the measure which they now adopted by the advice of Themistocles. There was a considerable revenue arising from the silver mines

of mount Laurium, which had been hitherto employed in relieving the private wants of the citizens, or dissipated in their public amusements. This annual income Themistocles persuaded them to destine to the useful purpose of building ships of war, by which they might seize or destroy the fleet of Ægina. The proposal was approved; an hundred galleys were equipped; the naval strength of Ægina was broken, and

They defeat the fleets of Ægina and Corcyra. success animated the Athenians to aspire at obtaining the unrivalled empire of the sea. Corcyra formed the only remaining obstacle to their ambi-

tion. This island which, under the name of Phœacia, is celebrated by Homer for its amazing riches and fertility, had been still farther improved by a colony of Corinthians. It extends about fifty miles along the western shores of Epirus and the natural abundance of its productions, the convenience of its harbours, and the adventurous spirit of its new inhabitants, gave them an undisputed advantage over their neighbours, in navigation and commerce. They became successively the rivals, the enemies, and the superiors of Corinth, their mother country; and their successful cruisers infested the coasts, and disturbed the communication of the islands and continent of Greece. It belonged to Athens, who had so lately punished the perfidy of Ægina, to chastise the insolence of the Corcyreans. The naval depredations of these islanders made them be regarded as common enemies; and Themistocles,* when by seizing part of their fleet, he broke the sinews of their power, not only gratified the ambition of his republic, but performed a signal service to the whole Grecian confederacy.

* Plutarch. in Themist. Thucyd. lib. i. Corn. Nepos, in Themist.

Victorious by sea and land, against Greeks and Barbarians, Athens might now seem entitled to enjoy the fruits of a glorious security. It was generally believed in Greece, that the late disaster of the Persians would deter them from invading, a second time, the coasts of Europe. But Themistocles, who, in the words of a most accomplished historian,* was no less sagacious in foreseeing the future, than skilful in managing the present, regarded the battle of Marathon, not as the end of the war, but as the prelude to new and more glorious combats. He continually exhorted his fellow-citizens to keep themselves in readiness for action; above all, to increase with unremitting assiduity, the strength of their fleet: and, in consequence of this judicious advice, the Athenians were enabled to oppose the immense armaments of Xerxes, of which the most formidable tidings soon arrived from every quarter, with two hundred galleys of a superior size and construction to any hitherto known in Greece.†

Strength
and spirit of
Athens.

This fleet proved the safety of Greece, and prevented a country from which the knowledge of laws, learning, and civility was destined to flow over Europe, from becoming a province of the Persian empire, and being confounded with the mass of barbarous nations. While the Athenians were led by the circumstances which we have endeavoured to explain, to prepare this useful engine of defence, the other Grecian states afford, in their unimportant transactions, few materials for history.‡ The Spartans had long preserved an unrivalled ascendant in Peloponnesus; and their pre-eminence was still farther confirmed by the unequal and unfortunate opposition of the Argives. Many bloody and desperate engagements had been fought between these warlike and high-spirited rivals: but, before the Persian invasion, the strength of Argos was much exhausted by repeated defeats, particularly by the de-

State of the
the other
republics
immediate-
ly preced-
ing the in-
vasion of
Xerxes.

* Thucydides, *ibid.*

† Plato, l. iii. de Leg.

‡ Herodot. l. vii. Diodor. l. xi.

structive battle of Thyraea, in which she lost six thousand of her bravest citizens. The Spartans also carried on occasional hostilities against the Corinthians and Achæans, the inhabitants of Elis and Arcadia; and these several republics frequently decided their pretensions in the field; but neither their contests with each other, nor their wars with Sparta, were attended with any considerable or permanent effects. Their perpetual hostilities with foreign states ought to have given internal quiet to the Spartans; yet the jealousy of power, or the opposition of character, occasioned incurable dissension between the two first magistrates of the republic, Cleomenes and Demaratus. By the intrigues of the former, his rival was unjustly deposed from the royal dignity. Leotychides, his kinsman and successor in the throne, insulted his misfortunes; and Demaratus, unable to endure contempt in a country where he had enjoyed a crown, sought for that protection which was denied him in Greece, from the power and resentment of Persia. Cleomenes soon afterwards died by his own hand, after vainly struggling against the stings of remorse, which persecuted his ungenerous treatment of a worthy colleague.* He was succeeded by the heroic Leonidas, whose death (as shall be related) at Thermopylae, was still more illustrious and happy than that of Cleomenes was wretched and infamous. During the domestic disturbances of Sparta, the other states of Peloponnesus enjoyed a relaxation from the toils of war. The Arcadians and Argives, tended their flocks, and cultivated their soil. Elis was contented with the superintendence of the Olympic games; the Corinthians increased and abused the wealth which they had already acquired by their fortunate situation between two seas, and by long continuing the centre of the internal commerce of Greece. Of the republics beyond the isthmus, the Phocians wished to enjoy, in tranquillity, the splendour and riches which their whole territory derived from the celebrated temple of Delphi. They were frequently disturbed however, by invasions from Thessaly; the inhabitants

* Herodot. v. 75.

of which, though numerous and warlike, yet being situate at the extremity of Greece, still continued, like the Etolians, barbarous and uncultivated.* The Thebans maintained and extended their usurpations over the smaller cities of Bœotia, and rejoiced at the ambition of the Athenians, directed to the command of the sea, and the conquest of distant islands, prevented that aspiring people from giving the same minute attention as usual to the affairs of the continent. The other republics were inconsiderable, and commonly followed the fortunes of their more powerful neighbours. The Asiatic colonies were reduced under the Persian yoke; the Greek establishments in Thrace and Macedon paid tribute to Xerxes; but the African Greeks bravely maintained their independence; and the flourishing settlements in Italy and Sicily were now acting a part which will be explained hereafter, and which rivalled, perhaps surpassed, the glory of Athens and Sparta in the Persian war.†

Of the colonies.

Meanwhile the reduction of revolted provinces had given employment and lustre to the Persian arms. Nine years after the battle of Marathon, and in the fourth year of his reign, Xerxes found himself uncontrolled master of the east, and in possession of such a fleet and army as flattered him with the hopes of universal empire. The three last years of Darius were spent in preparing for the Grecian expedition. Xerxes, who succeeded to his sceptre and to his revenge, dedicated four years more to the same hostile purpose. Amidst his various wars and pleasures, he took care that the artisans of Egypt and Phœnicia, as well as of all the maritime provinces of Lower Asia, should labour, with unremitting diligence, in fitting out an armament adequate to the extent of his ambition. Twelve hundred ships of war, and three thousand ships of burden, were at length ready to receive his commands. The former were of a larger size and firmer construction than any hitherto seen in the ancient world: they carried on board,

The preparations of Xerxes for invading Greece. Olymp. lxxiv. 4. A. C. 481.

* Thucyd. l. i.

† Diodor. l. xi. c. xvi. & xvii.

at a medium, two hundred seamen, and thirty Persians who served as marines. The ships of burden contained, in general, eighty men, fewer being found incapable of rowing them. The whole amounted to four thousand two hundred ships, and above five hundred thousand men, who were ordered to rendezvous in the most secure roads and harbours of Ionia. We are not exactly informed of the number of the land forces, which were assembled at Susa. It is certain, however, that they were extremely numerous, and it is probable that they would continually increase on the march from Susa to Sardes, by the confluence of many tributary nations, to the imperial standard of Xerxes.

Their magnitude. When the army had attained its perfect complement, we are told that it consisted of seventeen hundred thousand infantry, and four hundred thousand cavalry; which, joined to the fleet above mentioned, made the whole forces amount to nearly two millions of fighting men. An immense crowd of women and eunuchs followed the camp of an effeminate people. These instruments of pleasure and luxury, together with the slaves necessary in transporting the baggage and provisions, equaled, perhaps exceeded,* the number of the soldiers; so that, according to the universal testimony of ancient historians, the army of Xerxes should appear the greatest that was ever collected.†

But many circumstances serve to prove that its strength by no means corresponded with its magnitude. The various na-

* A military friend has favoured me with the actual return of an army serving under British officers in the East:

Officers and troops,	- - - - -	6,727
Servants and followers,	- - - - -	19,779

† Herodot. l. vii. c. cxxxix. & seq. enters into a circumstantial detail of the Persian forces. His account is confirmed, with less difference than usual in such cases, by Lysias Orat. Funeb. Isocrat. Panegyri. Diodor. l. xi. p. 244. Herodotus repeatedly expresses his astonishment at the immensity of the barbarian hosts. He appears fully sensible of the difficulties with which they had to struggle, in order to procure provisions. His account of the Grecian fleet and army is acknowledged to be faithful and exact in the highest degree; circumstances which strongly confirm the credibility of his evidence.

tions which composed it, were not divided into regular bodies, properly disciplined and officered. Their muster-roll was taken in a manner that is remarkable for its simplicity. Ten thousand men were separated from the rest, formed into a compact body, and surrounded by a pallisade. The whole army passed successively into this inclosure, and were thus numbered like cattle, without the formality of placing them in ranks, or of calling their names.

Xerxes, having wintered at Sardes, sent ambassadors early in the Spring to demand earth and water, as a mark of submission from the several Grecian republics. With regard to Athens and Sparta, he thought it unnecessary to observe this ceremony, as they had treated, with the most inhuman cruelty, and in direct contradiction to their own laws of war, the messengers intrusted with a similar commission from his father Darius. The slow march of his immense army, and, still more, its tedious transportation across the seas which separate Europe from Asia, ill suited the rapid violence of his revenge. Xerxes therefore ordered a bridge of boats to be raised on the Hellespont, which, in the narrowest part, is only seven stadia, or seven-eighths of a mile in breadth. Here the bridge was formed with great labour; but whether owing to the awkwardness of its construction, or to the violence of a succeeding tempest, it was no sooner built than destroyed. The great king ordered the directors of the work to be beheaded; and, proud of his tyrannic power over feeble man, displayed an impotent rage against the elements. In all the madness of despotism he commanded the Hellespont to be punished with three hundred stripes, and a pair of fetters to be dropped into the sea, adding these frantic and ridiculous expressions; "It is thus, thou salt and bitter water, that thy master punishes thy unprovoked injury, and he is determined to pass thy treacherous streams notwithstanding all the insolence of thy malice."* After this absurd ceremony, a new bridge was

Xerxes
passes the
Hellespont.
Olymp.
lxxv. l.
A. C. 480.

* Herodot. vii. 35.

made of a double range of vessels, fixed by strong anchors on both sides, and joined together by cables of hemp and reed, fastened to immense beams driven into the opposite shores. The decks of the vessels, which exceeded six hundred in number were strewed with trunks of trees and earth, and their surface was still further smoothed by a covering of planks. The sides were then railed with wicker work, to prevent the fear and impatience of the horses and upon this singular edifice the main strength of the army passed in seven days and nights, from the Asiatic city of Abydos to that of Sestos in Europe.*

Cuts a canal through the isthmus of Sana. But before this general transportation, a considerable division of the forces had been already sent to the coast of Macedonia in order to dig across the

isthmus which joins to that coast the high promontory of Athos. The disaster which befel the fleet commanded by Mardonius in doubling the cape of this celebrated peninsula, was still present to the mind of Xerxes. The neck of land, only a mile and a half in breadth, was adorned by the Grecian city of Sana; and the promontory being rich and fertile, was well inhabited by both Greeks and barbarians. The cutting of this narrow isthmus, by a canal of sufficient width to allow two galleys to sail abreast, was a matter not beyond the power of a potentate who commanded the labour of so many myriads;† but it is observed by Herodotus, to have

* Herodot. l. vii. c. lvi.

† Herodot. l. vii. c. xxi. & seq. & Diodor. l. xi. c. ii. It is difficult to say, whether we ought most to condemn the swelling exaggeration with which Lysias, Isocrates, and other writers, speak of these operations of Xerxes, which they call "navigating the land, and walking the sea," or the impudent incredulity of Juvenal:

———creditur olim

Velificatus Athos, & quidquid Græcia mendax

Audet in historia, constratum classibus iisdem

Suppositumque rotis solidum mare.———

Nothing is better fitted to perpetuate error than the smart sentence of a satirist. A line of the same Juvenal has branded Cicero as a bad poet, though that universal literary genius left admirable verses behind him, which have been transmitted to modern times. The digging of the canal of Athos is supported by the uniform testimony of all antiquity, and might be credited

been a work of more ostentation than utility, as the vessels might, according to the custom of the age, have been conveyed over land with greater expedition, and with less trouble and expense. The eastern workmen were in general so extremely unacquainted with operations of this kind, that they made the opening at the surface no larger than that necessary at the bottom of the channel. In order to excite their diligence by national emulation, a particular portion of the ground was assigned to each distinction of people engaged in this undertaking. The Phœnicians alone, by giving a proper width at the top, avoided the inconvenience of submitting to a double labour. In performing this, and every other task, the soldiers of Xerxes were kept to their work by stripes and blows; a circumstance which gives us as mean an opinion of their spirit and activity, as all that has been already related, gives us of their skill and discipline.

The Persian forces were now safely conducted into Europe; and the chief obstacle to the easy navigation of their fleet along the coasts of Thrace, Macedon, and Thessaly, to the centre of the Grecian states, was removed by the dividing of mount Athos. Through the fertile plains of Lesser Asia, the whole army had kept in a body; but the difficulty of supplies obliged them to separate into three divisions in their march through the less cultivated countries of Europe. Before this separation took place, the whole fleet and army were reviewed by Xerxes, near Doriscus, a city of Thrace, at the mouth of the river Hebrus. Such an immense collection of men assembled in arms, and attended with every circumstance of martial magnificence, gave an opportunity for seeing, or at least for supposing, many affecting scenes. The ambition of the great king had torn him from his palace of Susa, but it could not tear him

Xerxes re-
views his
forces near
Doriscus.

on the single evidence of Thucydides, (l. iv. c. cix.) the most faithful, accurate, and impartial of all historians, ancient or modern; and who himself lived long in the neighbourhood of Athos, where he had an estate, and was director of the Athenian mines in Thrace; as will appear hereafter.

from the objects of his affection, and the ministers of his pleasure. He was followed by his women, and by his flatterers ;* and all the effeminate pride of a court was blended with the pomp of war. While the great body of the army lay every night in the open air, Xerxes and his attendants were provided with magnificent tents. The splendour of his chariots, the mettle of his horses, which far excelled the swiftest racers in Thessaly, the unexampled number of his troops, and above all, the bravery of the immortal band, a body of ten thousand Persian cavalry, so named because their number was constantly maintained from the flower of the whole army, seemed sufficient to the admiring crowd, to raise the glory of their sovereign above the condition of humanity ; especially since, among so many thousands of men as passed in review, none could be compared to Xerxes in strength, in beauty, or in stature.†

Misery of Xerxes. But amidst the splendour of external greatness, Xerxes felt himself unhappy. Having ascended an eminence to view his camp and fleet, his pride was humbled with the reflection, that no one of all the innumerable host could be expected to survive an hundred years. The haughty monarch of Asia was melted into tears. The conversation of his kinsman and counsellor Artabanus, was ill calculated to console his melancholy. That respectable old man, whose wisdom had often moderated the youthful impetuosity of Xerxes, and who had been as assiduous to prevent, as Mardonius had been to promote, the Grecian war, took notice that the misery of human life was an object far more lamentable than its shortness. “ In the narrow space allotted them, has not every one of these in our presence, and indeed the whole human race, often wished rather to die than to live ? The tumult of passions disturbs the best of our days ; diseases and weakness accompany old age ; and death, so vainly dreaded, is the sure and hospitable refuge of wretched mortals.”

* Plato de Legibus, l. iii. p. 536.

† Herodot. l. vii. c. clxxxiv.

Xerxes was not of a disposition steadily to contemplate the dictates of experience and the maxims of philosophy. He endeavoured to divert those gloomy reflections which he could not remove, by amusing his fancy with horse-races, mock-battles, and other favourite entertainments. In the intervals of these diversions, he sometimes conversed with Demaratus, the banished king of Sparta, who, as we have already mentioned, had sought refuge in the Persian court, from the persecution of his countrymen. A memorable interview between them is related by Herodotus. The Persian, displaying ostentatiously the magnitude of his power, asked the royal fugitive, Whether he suspected the Greeks would yet venture to take the field, in order to oppose the progress of his arms? Demaratus replied, that if he might speak without giving offence, he was of opinion that the Persians would meet with a very vigorous resistance. "Greece had been trained in the severe, but useful school of necessity; poverty was her nurse and her mother; she had acquired patience and valour, by the early application of discipline; and she was habituated to the practice of virtue by the watchful attention of the law. All the Greeks were warlike, but the Spartans were peculiarly brave. It was unnecessary to ask their number, for if they exceeded not a thousand men, they would defend their country and their freedom against the assembled myriads of Asia."*

He converses with Demaratus, the banished king of Sparta.

Xerxes was rather amused than instructed by this discourse. His hopes of success seemed built on too solid principles to be shaken by the opinion of a prejudiced Greek. Every day messengers arrived with the submission of new nations. The inhabitants of the rocky country of Doris, many tribes of Thessaly, the mountaineers of Pindus, Ossa, Pelion and Olympus, which, like a lofty rampart, surround that country, offered the usual present of earth and water, as the symbol of surrendering their territories to a power which it seemed vain to resist.

Receives the submission of many Grecian communities.

* Herodot. l. vii. c. cii. & seq.

These districts formed only the northern frontier of Greece. But what gave peculiar pleasure to Xerxes, the Thebans who inhabited the central parts, and all the cities of Bœotia, except Thespiæ and Platæa, privately sent ambassadors to testify their good-will to his cause, and to request the honour of his friendship.

Measures
of the
Athenians
and their
confederates.

Meanwhile those Grecians, who, unmoved by the terrors of invasion, obeyed the voice of liberty and their country, had sent deputies to the isthmus of Corinth, to deliberate about the common interest.

They consisted of representatives from the several states of Peloponnesus, and from the most considerable republics beyond that peninsula. By common consent, they suspended their domestic animosities, recalled their fugitives, consulted their oracles, and despatched ambassadors, in the name of united Greece, to demand assistance from the islands of Crete, Cyprus, and Corsyra, as well as from the Grecian colonies on the coasts of Italy and Sicily. All their measures were carried on with great appearance of unanimity and concord. Even the Thebans, careful to conceal their treachery, had sent representatives to the common council. The general danger seemed to unite and harmonize the most discordant members: and although unceasing dissensions between rival states, frequently weakened the authority of the Amphictyonic confederacy, it appeared on the present, as on many future occasions, that the Greeks acknowledged the obligation of a tacit alliance to defend each other against domestic tyrants and foreign barbarians.

The Thes-
salians
crave their
assistance.

The valley
of Tempé,

Before they had an opportunity of learning the will of the gods, or of discovering the intentions of their distant allies, ambassadors arrived from those communities of Thessaly which still adhered to the interest of Greece, praying a speedy and effectual assistance towards guarding the narrow passes which lead into their country. There is a valley near the coast of the Ægean, between the lofty mountains of Ossa and Olympus, which afforded the most convenient passage from

Macedon into Thessaly. This singular spot, commonly called the valley of Tempé, is about five miles in length, and, where narrowest, scarcely an hundred paces in breadth; but is adorned by the hand of nature with every object that can gratify the senses or delight the fancy. The gently flowing Peneus* intersects the middle of the plain. Its waters are increased by perennial cascades from the green mountains, and thus rendered of sufficient depths for vessels of considerable burden. The rocks are every where planted with vines and olives, and the banks of the river and even the river itself, are overshadowed with lofty forest trees, which defend those who sail upon it from the sun's meridian ardour. The innumerable grottos and harbours carelessly scattered over this delightful scene, and watered by fountains of peculiar freshness and salubrity, invite the weary traveller to repose; while the musical warbling of birds conspires with the sweet fragrance of flowers to sooth his senses, and to heighten the pleasure which the eye and fancy derive from viewing the charming variety of this enchanting landscape; from examining the happy intermixture of hill and dale, wood and water; and from contemplating the diversified beauty, and majestic grandeur of Nature under her most blooming and beneficent aspects.

This delicious valley, which an ancient writer, Is occupied by the Greeks; by a bold figure of speech, calls "a festival for the eyes," and which the bounty of the gods had formed for happy scenes of love, innocence, and tranquillity, the destructive ambition of man was ready to convert into a field of bloodshed and horror. It was natural for the Thessalians to expect that the troops of Xerxes would pass by this inlet into their territories; and hither their ambassadors entreated

* I know not why Ovid says,

Peneus ab imo

Effusus Pindo *spumosis* volvitur undis.

Metam. l. i. ver. 573.

Ælian (from whom the description in the text is taken) says, that the Peneus flows,

Δίκην ἑλαίου, smooth as oil.

the allied Greeks to send an army. The proposal seemed just and useful; ships were prepared at the isthmus; and a body of ten thousand men were embarked under the command of Themistocles, with orders to sail through the narrow Euripus, to land in the harbours of Tempé, and remain there in order to guard that important pass.

but soon They had not continued in those parts many abandoned. days, when a messenger arrived from Alexander, son of Amyntas, tributary prince of Macedonia, advising them to depart from that post, unless they meant to be trodden under foot by the Persian cavalry. It is not probable, however, that this menace could have changed their resolution. But they had already learned that there was another passage into Thessaly, through the territory of the Perræbians, near the city Gonnus in Upper Macedonia. Their army was insufficient to guard both; and the defending of one only, could not be of essential advantage to themselves, to the Thessalians, or to the common cause.

The dangers which threaten Greece become more imminent and alarming. Meantime, the dangers which thickened over their respective republics, rendered it necessary to return southward. Their distant colonies, particularly those of Sicily, which were the most numerous and powerful, could not afford them any assistance, being themselves threatened with a formidable invasion from the Carthaginians, the cause and consequences of which we shall have occasion fully to explain. The oracles were doubtful, or terrifying. To the Spartans they announced, as the only means of safety, the voluntary death of a king of the race of Hercules. The Athenians were commanded to seek refuge within their wooden walls. The responses given to the other states are not particularly recorded; but it appears in general, that all were dark, ambiguous, or frightful. The Grecian army returned therefore to their ships, repassed the Euripus, and arrived in safety at Corinth: while the Thessalians, thus abandoned by their allies, reluctantly submitted to the common enemy.

The terror inspired by the critical situation of affairs, rendered the presence of the leaders necessary in their respective communities. Themistocles found the Athenians divided about the meaning of the oracle, the greater part asserting, that by wooden walls was understood the inclosure of the citadel, which had been formerly surrounded by a palisade. Others gave the words a different construction, and each according to his fears or his interest; but Themistocles asserted that all of them had mistaken the advice of the god, who desired them to trust for safety to their fleet. This opinion, supported by all the force of his eloquence, and the weight of his authority, at length prevailed in the assembly, although Epicides, a demagogue of great influence among the lower ranks of people, opposed it with the utmost vehemence; and seizing this opportunity to vilify the character of Themistocles, insisted that he himself should be appointed general in his room. But the prudent Athenian knew the weakness of his adversary; his great passion was avarice; and a seasonable bribe immediately silenced his clamorous opposition. The Athenian galleys were fitted out with all convenient speed, and being joined with those of Eubœa, Ægina, Corinth, and the maritime allies of Peloponnesus, amounted to a fleet of three hundred sail. They proceeded to the narrow sea which divides the northern shore of Eubœa from the coast of Thessaly, rendezvoused at the promontory of Artemisium, and patiently expected the arrival of the Barbarians.

Besides the force necessary for manning this fleet, the confederates could raise an army of about sixty thousand freemen, together with a still greater proportion of armed slaves. As the passes leading from Thessaly to the territories of Phocis and Locris, were still narrower and more difficult of access than those from Macedon into Thessaly, it seems extraordinary, that they did not immediately direct their whole military strength towards that quarter: but this neglect may be explained by their superstitious

The Grecian fleet sails to Artemisium.

The Greeks assemble an army.

veneration for oracles, the necessity of celebrating their accus-
 tomed festivals, and the dangerous delays and inactivity inhe-
 rent in the nature of a republican confederacy. As
 Guard the Straits of Thermopylæ. they were acquainted with only one pass, by which
 the Persians could arrive from Thessaly, they
 thought that a body of eight thousand pike-men
 might be equally capable with a larger proportion of troops,
 of defending it against every invader. This narrow defile
 was called the Straits of Thermopylæ, in allusion to the warm
 springs in that neighbourhood, and was deemed the gate or
 entrance into Greece. It was bounded on the west by high
 and inaccessible precipices which join the lofty ridge of mount
 Oeta; and on the east terminated by an impracticable morass,
 bordered by the sea. Near the plain of the Thessalian city
 of Trachis, the passage was fifty feet broad; but at Alpené,
 there was not room for one chariot to pass another. Even these
 passes were defended by walls, formerly built by the Phocians
 to protect them against the incursions of their enemies in
 Thessaly, and strengthened, on this occasion, with as much
 care as time would allow. The troops sent to Thermopylæ,
 which was only fifteen miles distant from the station of the
 Grecian fleet at Artemisium, consisted chiefly of Peloponne-
 sians, commanded by Leonidas the Spartan king, who was
 prepared, in obedience to the oracle, to devote his life for the
 safety of his country.

The Persian fleet arrive near Cape Sepias. Before the Grecian confederates adopted these
 vigorous measures for their own defence, the Per-
 sian army had marched, in three divisions, from
 Thracian Doriscus. They were accompanied by the fleet,
 which, coasting about two hundred miles along the shores of
 Thrace, Macedon, and Thessaly, at length reached Cape
 Sepias, which is twenty miles north of Artemisium. As they
 advanced southward, they laid under contribution Abdera,*

* The places on the road prepared not only vast magazines of corn and
 other provisions for the troops, but sumptuous entertainments for Xerxes and
 his attendants. A saying of Megacreon of Abdera expressed the devouring

Thasus, and Eion, the principal Grecian colonies in Thrace, as well as the cities of Torona, Olynthus, Potidæa, and other places of smaller note on the coast of Macedônia. The whole fleet anchored, after performing the most tedious and dangerous part of the voyage, near the entrance of the rivers Axius and Lydius, which flow into the Thermaic gulf; and, after quitting these harbours, spent eleven days in sailing eighty miles, along a smooth unbroken coast, from the northern extremity of this gulf to the general rendezvous near Cape Sepias.

The fleet was commanded by Achæmines and Ariabignes, sons of Darius. Xerxes in person headed his army, which made a considerable halt at the Macedonian towns of Therma and Pella, and encamped in the Thracian plains on each side of the above mentioned rivers Axius and Lydius. From hence they proceeded in three bodies; the division nearest the shore was commanded by Mardonius and Masistes. Sergis, an experienced general, conducted the march through the higher parts of the country: and the great king, accompanied by Smerdones and Megabyzus, who occasionally relieved him from the trouble of command, chose the middle passage as the safest, the most convenient, and the most entertaining; for hitherto the Persian expedition was rather a journey of pleasure, than an undertaking of fatigue or danger. Xerxes examined at leisure such objects of nature or art as appeared most interesting and curious. His fancy was amused, as he passed the various scenes of superstition, with the legendary tales carefully related by his conductors. He viewed with pleasure the wide plains of Thessaly, which bore indubitable marks of being once an extensive lake; and contemplated with wonder the lofty mountains which separated that country from the rest of

Their army marches to the plains of Trachis.

rapacity of the invaders: "The Abderites ought to thank the gods, that Xerxes feasted but once a day; it would ruin Abdera to furnish him with both a dinner and a supper."

Greece, and which evidently appear to be rent asunder, and to have received their present form from the terrible operations of volcanos and earthquakes. After fully satisfying his curiosity, he joined with the division more immediately under his command, the remainder of the army, assembled and encamped on the wide plains of Trachis, about forty miles in circumference, stretching along the shore of Thessaly, opposite to the station of the Persian fleet, and adjacent to the Straits of Thermopylæ.*

Circumstances that rendered the Spartans respectable to Xerxes. For more than twelve months, Xerxes had never seen the face of an enemy. He had traversed, without resistance, the wide regions of Asia, and the countries which in ancient times were deemed most warlike in Europe. All the territories beyond

Trachis acknowledged his power; and the districts of Greece, which still presented a scene of action to his invincible arms, were less extensive than the meanest of his provinces. Yet it is probable that he heard, not without emotion, that an army of Greeks, headed by the Spartan king, had taken post at Thermopylæ, in order to dispute his passage. What he had been told by Demaratus concerning the character and principles of that heroic people, he might now, when the danger drew near, be the more inclined to believe, from the suggestions of his own memory and experience. In the warmth of generous indignation, the Spartans, as we have already observed, had put to death the Persian heralds sent to demand their submission; but upon cool reflection, they were prompted, chiefly indeed by superstitious motives, to make atonement for a violation of the sacred law of nations. When proclamation was made in the assembly, "Who would die for Sparta?" two citizens, of great rank and eminence, offered themselves as willing sacrifices for the good of the community. Sperthies and Bulis (for these were their names) set out for Susa on this singular errand. As they passed through Lesser Asia, they were entertained by Hydarnes, the governor of that province, who

* Herodot. Diodor. Plutarch. *ibid.*

actually accompanied Xerxes, as commander of the Immortal Band, to which dignity he had been raised through superior merit. Hydarnes, among other discourse with the Spartans, testified his surprise, that their republic should be so averse to the friendship of the king his master, who he observed, as they might learn by his own example, well understood the value of brave men. That, if they complied with the desires of Xerxes, he would appoint them governors over the other cities of Greece. The Spartans coolly replied, "That he talked of a matter of which he was not a competent judge. With the condition and rewards of servitude, he was indeed sufficiently acquainted; but as to the enjoyments of liberty, he had never proved how sweet they were; for, if he had once made that experiment, he would advise them to defend their freedom not only with lances, but with hatchets."*

The same magnanimity distinguished their behaviour at Susa. The guards told them, that, when admitted into the presence of Xerxes, they must observe the usual ceremony of prostrating themselves on the ground. But the Spartans declared, "That no degree of violence could make them submit to such mean adulation: that they were not accustomed to adore a man, and came not thither for such an impious purpose." They approached Xerxes, therefore, in an erect posture, and told him with firmness, that they came to submit to any punishment which he might think proper to inflict on them, as an atonement for the death of his heralds. Xerxes, admiring their virtue, replied, "That he certainly should not repeat the error of the Greeks, nor, by sacrificing individuals, deliver the state from the guilt of murder and impiety." The Spartans having received this answer, returned home, persuaded that they had done their duty in offering private satisfaction; which, though not accepted, ought sufficiently to atone for the public crime.†

The example of these distinguished patriots probably gave Xerxes a very favourable idea of the He sends messengers

* Herodot. l. vii. c. cxxxiv.

† Idem, l. vii. c. cxxxiv. & seq.

to treat with them. general character of their community. As he had not any particular quarrel with the Spartans, whose opposition, though it could not prevent, would certainly retard his intended punishment of Athens, he sent messengers to desire them to lay down their arms; to which they replied, "Come and take them." The messengers then offered them lands, on condition they became allies to the Great King; but they answered, "That it was the custom of their republic to conquer lands by valour, not to acquire them by treachery." Except in making these smart replies, they took not the smallest notice of the Persians; but continued to employ themselves as before their arrival, contending in the gymnastic exercises, entertaining themselves with music and conversation, or adjusting their long hair to appear more terrible to their enemies. The messengers of Xerxes, equally astonished at what they saw and heard, returned to the Persian camp, and described the unexpected issue of their commission, as well as the extraordinary behaviour of the Spartans; of which Xerxes desired an explanation from their countryman Demaratus.* The latter declared in general that their whole carriage and demeanour announced a determined resolution to fight to the last extremity: but he found it difficult to make the Persian conceive the motives of men, who sought, at the certain price of their own lives, to purchase immortal renown for their country.—That a few individuals should be animated, on some extraordinary occasions, with this patriotic magnanimity, may easily be understood. Of this, history in all ages furnishes illustrious examples, but that a whole nation should be habitually impressed with the same generosity of character, cannot readily be believed, without reflecting on the institutions and manners of the Spartans. The laws of that celebrated people prohibiting, as it has been already observed,† the introduction of wealth and luxury, and rigidly confining each individual to the rank in which he was born, had extinguished the great motives of private ambi-

Magnanimity of the Spartans.

* Herodot. l. vii. c. ccix. & seq.

† See above, c. iii. p. 103.

tion, and left scarcely any other scope to the active principles of men, but the glory of promoting the interests of their republic. Their extraordinary military success, the natural fruit of their temperance and activity, had given them a permanent sense of their superiority in war, which it became their chief point of honour to maintain and to confirm; and, as the law which commanded them to die rather than break their ranks, or abandon their posts in battle, was, like all the ordinances of Lycurgus, conceived to be of divine authority, the influence of superstition happily conspired with the ardour of patriotism and the enthusiasm of valour, in preparing them to meet certain death in the service of the public.

Xerxes could not be made to enter into these motives, or to believe, as Herodotus observes with inimitable simplicity, “that the Grecians were come to Thermopylæ only as men desirous to die, and to destroy as many of their enemies as they could,” though nothing was more true. He therefore waited four days, continually expecting that they would either retreat into their own country, or surrender their arms, agreeably to his message. But, as they continued to guard the passage, he ascribed this conduct to obstinacy or folly; and, on the fifth day, he determined to chastise their insolent opposition.

Xerxes waits four days, in hopes of changing their resolution.

The Medes and Cissians, who, next to the Sacæ and Persians, formed the bravest part of his army, were commanded to attack these obstinate Greeks, and to bring them alive into the king's presence. The barbarians marched with confidence to the engagement, but were repulsed with great slaughter. The places of those who fell were incessantly supplied with fresh troops, but they could not make the smallest impression on the firm battalions of the Greeks; and the great loss which they sustained in the attempt, convinced all, and particularly the king himself, that he had indeed many men, but few soldiers. The Sacæ, armed with their hatchets, next marched to the attack, but without better success; and last of all, the chosen band of

Gives orders to attack them and their confederates.

Persians, headed by Hydarnes, deigned to display their valour in what appeared to them a very unequal contest. But they soon changed their opinion when they came to close with the enemy; for, says Herodotus, their numbers were useless, as they fought in a narrow pass, and their short-pointed weapons were ill calculated to contend with the length of the Grecian spear. The Greeks had the advantage still more in the superiority of their discipline, than in the excellence of their armour. Tired with destroying, they retreated in close order, and when pursued unguardedly by the barbarians, they faced about on a sudden, and killed an incredible number of the Persians, with scarcely any loss to themselves.

His troops
are repel-
led.

Xerxes, who was seated on an eminence to behold the battle, frequently started in wild emotion from his throne; and, fearing lest he should be deprived of the flower of his army, he ordered them to be drawn off from the attack. But as the Grecian numbers were so extremely inconsiderable, and as it seemed probable that the greatest part of them must have suffered much injury in these repeated assaults, he determined next day to renew the engagement. Next day he fought without better success than before; and after vainly endeavouring to force the pass, both in separate bodies, and with the collected vigour of their troops, the Persians were compelled to abandon the enterprise, and disgracefully to retire to their camp.

The Greeks
betrayed by
Epiates.

It was a spectacle which the world had never seen before, and which it was never again to behold, the persevering intrepidity of eight thousand men resisting the impetuous fury of an army composed of millions. The pertinacious valour of Leonidas, and of his little troop, opposed, and might have long retarded, the progress of the barbarians. But it was the fate of Greece, always to be conquered rather by the treachery of false friends, than by the force of open enemies. When Xerxes knew not what measures to pursue in order to effect his purpose, and felt the inconvenience of remaining long in the same quarters with such an immense number of men, a perfidious Greek, induced by

the hopes of reward, offered to remove his difficulties.* The name of the traitor was Epialtes, and he was a native of the obscure district of Mœlis, which separates the frontiers of Thessaly and Phocis. His experience of the country made him acquainted with a passage through the mountains of Oeta, several miles to the west of that guarded by Leonidas. Over this unfrequented path he undertook to conduct a body of twenty thousand Persians, who might assault the enemy in rear, while the main body attacked them in front. By this means whatever prodigies of valour the Greeks might perform, they must be finally compelled to surrender, as they would be enclosed on all sides among barren rocks and inhospitable deserts.

The plan so judiciously concerted, was carried into immediate execution. On the evening of the seventh day after Xerxes arrived at the Straits, twenty thousand chosen men left the Persian camp, commanded by Hydarnes, and conducted by Epialtes. All night they marched through the thick forests of oak which abound in those parts; and by daybreak they advanced near to the top of the hill. But how much were they surprised to see the first rays of the morning reflected by the glittering surfaces of Grecian spears and helmets! Hydarnes was afraid that these out-guards, which seemed at no great distance, also might be composed of Lacedæmonians; but a nearer approach showed that they consisted of a thousand Phocians, whom the foresight of Leonidas had sent to defend this important but unknown pass, which chance or treachery might discover to the Persians. The thick shade of the trees long concealed the enemy from the Greeks: at length the rustling of the leaves, and the tumult occasioned by the motion of twenty thousand men, discovered the imminence of danger: the Phocians with great intrepidity flew to their arms, and prepared, if they could not conquer, at least to die gallantly. The compact firmness of their ranks, which might

Epialtes
conducts a
Persian de-
tachment
over the
mountains.

* Herodot. l. vii. c. ccxii. & seq.

have resisted the regular onset of the enemy, exposed them to suffer much from the immense shower of darts which the Persians poured upon them. To avoid this danger, they too rashly abandoned the pass which they had been sent to guard, and retired to the highest part of the mountain, not doubting that the enemy, whose strength so much exceeded their own, would follow them thither. But in this they were disappointed; for the Persians prudently omitting the pursuit of this inconsiderable party, whom to destroy they considered as a matter of little moment, immediately seized the passage, and marched down the mountain with the utmost expedition, in order to accomplish the design suggested by Epialtes.

Alarm in the Grecian camp. Meanwhile, obscure intimations from the gods had darkly announced some dreadful calamity impending on the Greeks at Thermopylæ. The appearance of the entrails, which were carefully inspected by the augur Magistias, threatened the Spartans with death; but when, or by what means, it did not clearly appear, until a Grecian deserter, a native of the city of Cymé in Ionia, named Tyrastiades, arrived with the information of the intended march of the Persians across the mountain. Animated by the love of his country, this generous fugitive had no sooner discovered the treacherous design of Epialtes, than he determined, at the risk of his life, and still more at the risk of being subjected to the most excruciating tortures, to communicate his discovery to the Spartan king.* Zeal for the safety of Greece gave swiftness to his steps, and he appeared in the Grecian camp a few hours after the Persians, conducted by Epialtes, had left the plains of Trachis. Leonidas immediately called a council of war, to deliberate upon the measures necessary to be taken in consequence of this information, equally important and alarming. All the confederates of Peloponnesus, except the Spartans, declared their opinion that it was necessary to abandon a post, which, after the double attack announced to them should take place, it would be impossible

* Herodot. l. vii. c. ccxix. & seq.

with any hopes of success to maintain. As their exertions could not be of any avail to the public cause, it was prudent to consult their private safety ; and while time was yet allowed them, to retire to the isthmus of Corinth, where joining the rest of the auxiliaries, they might be ready to defend the Grecian peninsula against the fury of the Barbarians. It belonged to Leonidas to explain the sentiments of the Spartans. The other inhabitants of Peloponnesus, he observed, might follow the dictates of expediency, and return to the isthmus, in order to defend their respective territories ; but glory was the only voice which the Spartans had learned to obey. Placed in the first rank by the general consent of their country, they would rather die than abandon the post of honour ; and they were determined, therefore, at the price of their lives, to purchase immortal renown, to confirm the pre-eminence of Sparta, and to give an example of patriotism, worthy of being admired, if it should not be imitated, by posterity.

The dread of unavoidable and immediate death deterred the other allies from concurring with this magnanimous resolution. The Thespians, alone, amounting to seven hundred men, declared they would never forsake Leonidas. They were conducted by the aged wisdom of Demophilus, and the youthful valour of Dithyrambus. Their republic was united in the strictest alliance with Sparta, by which they had been often defended against the usurpation and tyranny of the Thebans. These circumstances added force to their natural generosity of sentiment, and determined them, on this occasion, to adhere with steadfast intrepidity to the measures of their Spartan allies. As the Thespians remained at Thermopylæ, from inclination, and from principles of distinguished bravery, the Thebans were detained by the particular desire of Leonidas, who was not unacquainted with the intended treachery of their republic. The four hundred men whom that perfidious community had sent to accompany his expedition, he regarded rather as hostages than auxiliaries ;

Magnanimity of Leonidas.

Seven hundred Thespians determine to remain with Leonidas ; who detains the perfidious Thebans.

nor was he unwilling to employ their doubtful fidelity in a desperate service. He thought that they might be compelled by force or stimulated by a sense of shame, to encounter the same dangers to which the Spartans and Thespians voluntarily submitted; and without discovering his suspicion of their treachery, he had a sufficient pretence for retaining them, while he dismissed his allies of Peloponnesus, because the Theban territories, lying on the northern side of the isthmus of Corinth, would necessarily be exposed to hostility and devastation, whenever the Barbarians should pass the straits of Thermopylæ. Besides the Thespians* and Thebans, the troops who remained with Leonidas consisted of three hundred Spartans, all chosen men, and fathers of sons. This valiant band, with unanimous consent, solicited their general to dedicate to the glory of Greece, and their own, the important interval yet allowed them, before they were surrounded by the Persians. The ardour of Leonidas happily conspired with the ready zeal of the soldiers. He therefore commanded them to prepare the last meal of their lives, and to sup like men who should to-morrow dine in Elysium. His own example confirmed the propriety of the command, for he made an abundant repast, in order to furnish strength and spirits for the long continuance of toil and danger.

The Greeks surprise the Persian camp in the night. It was now the dead of night when the Spartans, headed by Leonidas, marched in a close battalion towards the Persian camp, with resentment heightened by despair.† Their fury was terrible, and

* From the narrative of Herodotus, it would seem that the Thespians alone voluntarily remained with Leonidas and the Spartans. Yet the inscription which he cites makes the whole number who fought at Thermopylæ amount to four thousand.

Μυριασιν ποτε τηδε τριηκοσιας εμαχοντο,
Εκ Πελοποννησου χιλιαδες τετορες.

Isocrates likewise (p. 164.) says, that some Peloponnesians remained to fight.

† Diodor. l. xi. p. 247. The nocturnal assault, omitted by Herodotus, is mentioned not only by Diodorus, but by Plutarch, Justin, and most other writers. The general panegyric of Plato (in Menex.) of Lysias (Orat. Funeb.)

rendered still more destructive through the effect of Barbarian discipline; for the Persians having neither advanced guards, nor a watch word, nor confidence in each other, were incapable of adopting such measures for defence, as the sudden emergency required. Many fell by the Grecian spear, but much greater multitudes by the mistaken rage of their own troops, by whom, in the midst of this blind confusion, they could not be distinguished from enemies. The Greeks, wearied with slaughter, penetrated to the royal pavilion; but there, the first alarm of noise had been immediately perceived, amidst the profound silence and tranquillity which usually reigned in the tent of Xerxes: the great king had seasonably escaped with his favourite attendants, to the farther extremity of the encampment. Even here all was tumult, and horror, and despair, the obscurity of night increasing the terror of the Persians, who no longer doubted that the detachment conducted by Epialtes had been betrayed by that perfidious Greek; and that the enemy, reinforced by new numbers, now co-operated with the traitor, and seized the opportunity of assailing their camp, after it had been deprived of the division of Hydarnes, its principal ornament and defence.

The approach of day discovered to the Persians a dreadful scene of carnage; but it also discovered to them that their fears had multiplied the number of the enemy, who now retreated in close order to the straits of Thermopylæ. Xerxes, stimulated by the fury of revenge, gave orders to pursue them; and his terrified troops were rather driven than led to the attack, by the officers who marched behind the several divisions, and compelled them to advance by menaces, stripes, and blows. The Grecians, animated by their late success, and persuaded that they could not possibly escape death on the arrival of those who approach-

and of Isocrates (Panegyr.) required not their descending into such particulars. Yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, I should have omitted this incident, if it had appeared inconsistent with the honest narrative of Herodotus.

ed by way of the mountain, bravely halted in the widest part of the pass to receive the charge of the enemy. The shock was dreadful, and the battle was maintained on the side of the Greeks with persevering intrepidity and desperate valour. After their spears were blunted or broken, they attacked sword in hand, and their short but massy and well-tempered weapons, made an incredible havoc. Their progress was marked by a line of blood; when a Barbarian dart pierced the heart of Leonidas. The contest was no longer for victory and glory, but for the sacred remains of their king. Four times they dispelled the thickening mass of Persians; but as their unexampled valour was carrying off the inestimable prize, the hostile battalions were seen descending the hill under the conduct of Epialtes. It was now time to prepare for the last effort of generous despair. With close order and resolute minds, the Greeks, all collected in themselves, retired to the narrowest part of the strait, and took post behind the Phocian wall, on a rising ground, where a lion of stone was afterwards erected in honour of Leonidas. As they performed this movement, fortune, willing to afford every occasion to display their illustrious merit, obliged them to contend at once against open force and secret treachery. The Thebans, whom fear had hitherto restrained from defection, seized the present opportunity to revolt; and approaching the Persians with outstretched arms, declared that they had always been their friends; that *their* republic had sent earth and water, as an acknowledgment of their submission to Xerxes; and that it was with the utmost reluctance they had been compelled by necessity to resist the progress of his arms. As they approached to surrender themselves, many perished by the darts of the Barbarians; the remainder saved a perishing life, by submitting to eternal infamy. Meanwhile the Lacedæmonians and Thespians were assaulted on all sides. The nearest of the enemy beat down the wall, and entered by the breaches. Their temerity was punished by instant death. In this last struggle every Grecian showed the most heroic courage; yet if we believe the unanimous report of some Thessalians, and

others who survived the engagement, the Spartan Dionece^s deserved the prize of valour. When it was observed to him, that the Persian arrows were so numerous, that they intercepted the light of the sun, he said, how favourable a circumstance! the Greeks now fight in the shade! The brothers Alpheus and Maron are likewise particularized for their generous contempt of death, and for their distinguished zeal and energy in the service of their country. What these, and other virtues, could effectuate, the Greeks, both as individuals, and in a body, had already accomplished; but it became impossible for them longer to resist the impetuosity and weight of the darts, and arrows, and other missile weapons, which were continually poured upon them; and they were finally not destroyed or conquered, but buried under a trophy of Persian arms. Two monuments were afterwards erected near the spot where they fell: the inscription of the first announced the valour of a handful of Greeks,* who had resisted three millions of Barbarians; the second was peculiar to the Spartans and contained these memorable words: "Go, stranger, and declare to the Lacedæmonians, that we died here in obedience to their divine laws."†

* Isocrates, p. 164. makes the Spartans who fought at Thermopylæ amount to one thousand. Diodorus, l. xi p. 410. agrees with Herodotus, whose narrative is followed in the text. According to the most probable accounts, the Thespians were twice as numerous as the Spartans; although the latter have carried away all the glory of this singular exploit.

† Ω ξεῖνε ἀγγεῖλον Λακεδαιμονίους ὅτι ἐηδε
Κείμεθα τοῖς κεινῶν ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.

HERODOT. C. CXXVIII.

CHAP. X.

Sea Fight off Artemisium.—Xerxes ravages Phocis.—Enters Attica.—Magnanimity of the Athenians.—Sea Fight off Salamis.—Xerxes leaves Greece.—His miserable Retreat.—Campaign of Mardonius.—Battles of Platæa and Mycæ.—Issue of the Persian Invasion.

Disaster of the Persian fleet on the coast of Thessaly. DURING the military operations at Thermopylæ, the Grecian fleet was stationed in the harbour of Artemisium, the northern promontory of Eubœa.

That of the Persians, too numerous for any harbour to contain, had anchored in the road that extends between the city of Castanæa and the promontory of Sepias, on the coast of Thessaly. Here this formidable armada suffered the calamities foretold by the wisdom of Artabanus. In a conversation with Xerxes, that prudent old man had warned him against two enemies, the sea and the land, from whom his own rash inexperience seemed not to apprehend any danger. Yet both these enemies occasioned dreadful misfortunes to the Persians, whose numbers first exposed them to be destroyed at sea by a tempest, and afterwards to perish on land by a famine. The first line of their fleet was sheltered by the coast of Thessaly; but the other lines, to the number of seven, rode at anchor, at small intervals, with the prows of the vessels turned to the sea. When they adopted this arrangement, the waters were smooth, the sky clear, the weather calm and serene; but on the second morning after their arrival on the coast, the day began to lower, and the appearance of the heavens grew threatening and terrible. A dreadful storm of rain and thunder succeeded; and, what was more alarming, the billows began to rise to an amazing height, occasioned by a violent Hellespontin, or north-east wind, which, when it once begins to blow in

those seas with any considerable force, seldom ceases for several days. The nearest vessels were saved by hauling under the shore: of the more remote many were driven from their anchors; some foundered at sea, others split on the promontory of Sepias, and several bulged on the shallows of Melibæa. Three days the tempest raged with unabating fury. Four hundred galleys were destroyed by its violence, beside such a number of storeships and transports, that the Persian commanders, suspecting this disaster might occasion the revolt of the Thessalians, fortified themselves with a rampart of considerable height, entirely composed of the shattered fragments of the wreck.*

This bulwark was sufficient to protect them against the irruptions of the Greeks; but it could not defend them against the more dangerous fury of the waves. In a short time, therefore, they quit-
 ted their insecure station at Sepias, and with eight hundred ships of war, besides innumerable vessels of burden, sailed into the Pegasean bay, and anchored in the road of Apheté, which, at the distance of a few miles, lies directly opposite to the harbour of Artemisium.

The Persians sail to the Pegasean bay.

The Grecians had posted sentinels on the heights of Eubæa to observe the consequences of the storm, and to watch the motions of the enemy. When informed of the dreadful disaster which had befallen them, they poured out a joyous libation, and sacrificed, with pious gratitude, to "Neptune the Deliverer;" but the near approach of such a superior force soon damped their transports of religious festivity. Neptune had favoured them in the storm, yet this capricious god might assist their enemies in the engagement. In the council of war, called to deliberate on this important subject, it was the general opinion of the commanders, that they ought immediately to retire southward. The Eubæans, whose coasts must have thus been abandoned to the fury of invaders, were peculiarly interested

The commanders of the Grecian fleet think of returning southward.

* Herodot. l. vii. c. clxxxviii. & seq. Diodor. Sicul. l. xii. c. vii

in opposing this pusillanimous resolution. The passage into the continent of Greece, they observed, was still guarded by the magnanimity of Leonidas, and the bravery of the Spartans. Following this generous example, the Grecian fleet, however inferior in strength, ought to resist the Persians, and to protect the states and families of a rich and populous island.* This remonstrance had not any effect on the determined purpose of Euribiades the Spartan, who, on account of the ancient pre-eminence of his republic, was intrusted with the command of the fleet; an honour rather due to the personal merit of Themistocles, and the naval superiority of Athens.

Prevailed
on to re-
main at Ar-
temisium,
by the ad-
dress of
Themisto-
cles.

To the Athenian commander the Eubœans secretly applied, and, by a present of thirty talents, engaged him to use his influence to retain the Grecian armament for the defence of their coasts. Themistocles was well pleased at being bribed into a measure which his good sense and discernment approved. By a proper distribution of only eight talents, he brought over the other captains to his opinion, and thus effectually promoted the interest, and secured the good-will, of the Eubœans, while he retained for himself an immense sum of money, which might be usefully employed on many future occasions, in fixing, by largesses and expensive exhibitions, the fluctuating favour of his fellow-citizens.

Both sides
prepare for
battle.

Meanwhile the Persians, having recovered from the terrors of the storm, prepared for the engagement. As they entertained little doubt of victory, they had determined not to begin the attack, until they had sent two hundred of their best sailing vessels around the isle of Eubœa, to intercept the expected flight of the enemy through the narrow Euripus. In order to conceal this design, they ordered the detached ships to stand out to sea until they lost sight of the eastern coast of Eubœa, sailing behind the little island of Sciathus, and afterwards shaping their course by the promontories of Caphaneus and Gerestus. The stratagem,

Herodot. l. viii. c. ii. & seq.

concerted with more than usual judgment, was, however, discovered to the Greeks by Scyllias, a native of Scioné, now serving in the Persian fleet, but who had long languished for an opportunity of deserting to his countrymen. While the attention of the barbarians was employed in the preparations necessary for their new arrangement, Scyllias availed himself of his dexterity in diving, to swim, unperceived, to a boat which had been prepared at a sufficient distance, in which he fortunately escaped to Artemisium. He immediately gained admittance to the Grecian council, where the boldness of his enterprise gave persuasion to his words. In consequence of his seasonable and important information, the Greeks determined to continue till midnight in the harbour, and then weighing anchor, to sail in quest of the fleet, which had been sent out to prevent their escape. But his stratagem, by which they would have met the art of the enemy with similar address, was not carried into execution. The advice-boats, which had been immediately despatched to observe the progress of the Persians, returned before evening, without having seen any ships approaching in that direction.

This intelligence was welcome to the Greeks, who were unwilling, without evident necessity, to abandon their present posture. The enemy, who had lately suffered so severely in the storm, were now further weakened by a considerable diminution of their fleet. The strength of the adverse parties being thus reduced nearer to an equality, the weaker seized the opportunity to display their courage in fight, and their superior skill in naval action. About sun-set they approached in a line, and offered battle to the Persians. The latter did not decline the engagement, as their ships were still sufficiently numerous to surround those of their opponents. At the first signal the Greeks formed into a circle, at the second they began the fight. Though crowded into a narrow compass, and having the enemy on every side, they soon took thirty of their ships, and sunk many more. Night came on, accompanied with impetuous bursts of rain and thunder; the Greeks retired into the harbour of

The first sea-fight at Artemisium.

Artemisium ; the enemy were driven to the coast of Thessaly. As the wind blew from the south, the dead bodies and wrecks dashed with violence against the sides of their ships, and disturbed the motion of their oars. The Barbarians were seized with consternation and despair ; for scarcely had they time to breathe, after the former storm and shipwreck near Mount Pelion, when they were compelled to a dangerous sea-fight ; after darkness put an end to the battle, they were again involved in the gloom and horrors of a nocturnal tempest. By good fortune, rather than by design, the greatest part of the fleet escaped immediate destruction, and gained the Pegasean Bay. Their calamities were great and unexpected ; but the ships ordered to sail round Eubœa met with a still more dreadful disaster. They were overtaken by the storm, after they had adventured farther from the shore than was usual with the wary mariners of antiquity. Clouds soon intercepted the stars, by which alone they directed their course. They were driven they knew not whither by the force of the winds, or impelled by the impetuosity of currents. In addition to these misfortunes, they were terrified by the thunder, and overwhelmed by the deluge ; and after continuing during the greatest part of the night, the sport of the elements, they all perished* miserably, amidst the shoals and rocks of an unknown coast.

The morning arose with different prospects and hopes to the Persians and Greeks. To the former it discovered the extent of their misfortunes ; to the latter it brought a reinforcement of fifty-three Athenian ships. Encouraged by this favourable circumstance, they determined again to attack the enemy, at the same hour as on the preceding day, because their knowledge of the coast, and their skill in fighting their ships, rendered the dusk peculiarly propitious to their designs. At the appointed time, they sailed towards the road of Apheté, and having cut off the Sicilian squadron from the rest, totally destroyed it, and returned at night to Artemisium.

* Herodot. l. viii. c. xiii. Diodor. l. xi. c. xiii.

The Persian commanders being deeply affected with their repeated disasters, but still more alarmed at the much dreaded resentment of their king, they determined to make one vigorous effort, for restoring the glory of their arms. By art and stratagem, and under favour of the night, the Greeks had hitherto gained many important advantages. It now belonged to the Persians to choose the time for action. On the third day at noon, they sailed forth in the form of a crescent, which was still sufficiently extensive to infold the Grecian line. The Greeks, animated by former success, were averse to decline any offer of battle; yet it is probable that their admirals, and particularly Themistocles, would much rather have delayed it to a more favourable opportunity. Rage, resentment, and indignation, supplied the defect of the Barbarians in skill and courage. The battle was longer, and more doubtful, than on any former occasion; many Grecian vessels were destroyed; five were taken by the Egyptians, who particularly signalized themselves on the side of the Barbarians, as the Athenians did on that of the Greeks. The persevering valour of the latter at length prevailed, the enemy retiring, and acknowledging their superiority, by leaving them in possession of the dead and the wreck. But the victory cost them dear; since their vessels, particularly those of the Athenians, were reduced to a very shattered condition; and their great inferiority in the number and size of their ships, made them feel more sensibly every diminution of strength.

This circumstance was sufficient to make them think of retiring (while they might yet retire in safety) to the shores of the Corinthian Isthmus. The inclination to this measure received additional force from considering, that the Persians, however unfortunate by sea, had still an immense army; whereas the principal hope of Greece centred in its fleet. While the commanders were occupied with these reflections, Abronycus, an Athenian, who had been intrusted with a galley of thirty oars, to cruise in the Malian bay, and to watch the event of the battle of Ther-

The second sea-fight at Artemisium.

The Greeks sail to the Saronic Gulf.

mopylæ, arrived with an account of the glorious death of Leonidas. The engagements by sea and land had been fought on the same day. In both the Greeks defended a narrow pass, against a superior power; and in both the Persians had, with very different success, attempted, by surrounding, to conquer them. The intelligence brought by Abronycus confirmed their resolution of sailing southward; for it seemed of very little importance to defend the shores, after the enemy had obtained possession of the centre of the northern territories. Having passed the narrow Euripus, they coasted along the shore of Attica, and anchored in the strait of the Saronic Gulf, which separates the island of Salamis from the harbours of Athens.*

Themistocles' stratagem for making the Ionians desert their allies.

Before they left Artemisium, Themistocles, ever watchful to promote the interest of his country, endeavoured to alienate† from the Great King the affections of his bravest auxiliaries. Contrary to the advice of the prudent Artabanus, Xerxes had conducted the Asiatic Greeks to an unnatural expedition against their mother country. His wise kinsman in vain persuaded him to send them back, because it appeared equally dishonourable and dangerous to depend on the service of men, which could only be employed in his favour at the expense of every principle of duty, and of every sentiment of virtue. By hope and fear, by threats and promises, and chiefly by honouring them with marks of distinguished preference, Xerxes had hitherto preserved their reluctant fidelity. In order at once to destroy a connexion, which of its own accord seemed ready to dissolve, Themistocles engraved on the rocks, near the watering-place of Artemisium, the following words: "Men of Ionia, your conduct is most unjust in fighting against your ancestors, and in attempting to enslave Greece; resolve therefore, while it is yet in your power, to repair the injury.—If you cannot immediately desert from the Persian fleet, yet it will be easy for you to accomplish this design when we come to an engagement. You ought to remember, that yourselves

* Herodot. l. viii. c. xxi.

† Ibid. l. viii. c. xxii.

gave occasion to the quarrel between us and the Barbarians; and farther, that the same duties which children owe to their parents, colonies owe to their mother country.”*

When news arrived that the Grecian fleet had abandoned Artemisium, Xerxes regarded this retreat of the enemy as equal to a victory. He therefore issued orders, that his naval force, after ravaging the coast of Eubœa, should proceed to take possession of the harbours of Athens; while, at the head of his resistless army, he intended to make a victorious procession; rather than a march, into the Attic territory. The road thither from Thermopylæ passed through the countries of Phocis and Bœotia, the latter of which had already acknowledged his authority. The Phocians adhered to the cause of Greece; and were still farther confirmed in their allegiance, after the Thessalians, their inveterate enemies, had embraced the party of Xerxes. Such were the violent animosities which divided these hostile states, that, in the opinion of Herodotus, whichever side the Thessalians had taken, the Phocians would still have opposed them. He might perhaps have extended the observation to the other principal republics. The enthusiasm of Athens and Sparta in defending the cause of Greece, rendered the rival states of Thebes and Argos zealous in the service of Persia; and it is to be remembered, to the immortal glory of the friends of liberty and their country, that they had to struggle with domestic sedition, while they opposed and defeated a foreign invasion.

Having entered the territory of Phocis, the Persian army separated into two divisions, with a view to obtain more plentiful supplies of food and forage, and to destroy more completely the possessions of their enemies. The most numerous division followed the course of the river Cephissus, which flows from the Thessalian mountains to the

* This sentiment is the dictate of nature, and occurs often in the Roman as well as the Greek writers. “Quæ liberi parentibus, ea coloni antiquæ patriæ debent.” T. LIVIUS.

lake Copais in Bœotia. The fertile banks of the Cephissus were adorned by Charadra, Neon, Elatæa, and other populous cities, all of which were burned or demolished by the fury of Xerxes, and the resentment of the Thessalians. Historians particularly regret the destruction of the sacred walls of Abé, a city held in peculiar respect on account of the Temple of Apollo, famed for its unerring oracles, and enriched from the earliest times by the revered donations of superstition. The inhabitants had in general abandoned their towns, and taken refuge in the most inaccessible retreats of Mount Parnassus. But the natives of Abé, vainly confiding for safety in the sanctity of the place, became a prey to an undistinguishing rage, which equally disregarded things sacred and profane. The men perished by the sword, the women by the brutal lust of the Barbarians.

Extraordi- After committing these dreadful ravages, the
nary adven- principal division of the army marched into Bœo-
ture of a de- tia, by the way of Orchomenus. The *smaller* part
tachment (if either portion of such an immense host may be
that attack- distinguished by that epithet) stretched to the right,
ed Delphi. along the western skirts of mount Parnassus, and traced a
line of devastation from the banks of the Cephissus to the
temple of Delphi. Such was the fame of the immense riches
collected in this sacred edifice, that Xerxes is said to have
been as well acquainted with their amount, as with that of his
own treasury; and, to believe the adulation of his followers,
he alone was worthy to possess that invaluable depository.
The Delphians having learned by the unhappy fate of Abé,
that their religious employment could not afford protection,
either to their property or to their persons, consulted the ora-
cle, "Whether they should hide their treasures under ground,
or transport them to some neighbouring country?" The Py-
thia replied, "That the arms of Apollo were sufficient for the
defence of his shrine." The Delphians, therefore, confined
their attention to the means necessary for their personal safe-
ty. The women and children were transported by sea to
Achaia; the men climbed to the craggy tops of mount Cirphis

or descended to the deep caverns of Parnassus. Only sixty persons, the immediate ministers of Apollo, kept possession of the sacred city. But, could we credit the testimony of ancient historians, it soon appeared that the gods had not abandoned Delphi: scarcely had the Persians reached the temple of Minerva the Provident, situate at a little distance from the town, when the air thickened into an unusual darkness. A violent storm arose; the thunder and lightning were terrible. At length the tempest burst on mount Parnassus, and separated from its sides two immense rocks, which rolling down with increased violence, overwhelmed the nearest ranks of the Persians. The shattered fragments of the mountain, which long remained in the grove of Minerva, were regarded by the credulity of the Greeks as a standing proof of the miracle. But without supposing any supernatural intervention we may believe, that an extraordinary event happening on an extraordinary occasion, would produce great terror and consternation in the Barbarian army, since many of the nations which composed it acknowledged the divinity of Apollo, and must therefore have been sensible of their intended impiety, in despoiling his temple. The awful solemnity of the place conspired with the horrors of the tempest, and the guilty feelings of their own consciences. These united terrors were sufficient to disturb all the rational principles of their minds, and even to confound the clearest perceptions of their senses. They believed that they heard many sounds which they did not hear; and that they saw many phantoms which to the mind's eye only were visible. An universal panic seized them; at first they remained motionless, in silent amazement; they afterwards fled with disordered steps and wild despair. The Delphians, who perceived their confusion, and who believed that the gods, by the most manifest signs, defended their favourite abode, rushed impetuously from their fastnesses, and destroyed great numbers of the terrified and unresisting enemy.* The remainder took the road of Bœotia, in order to join the main body under

* Herodot. l. viii. c. xxxvii. & seq. & Diodor. l. xi, p. 250.

Xerxes, which having already destroyed the hostile cities of Thespiæ and Plataea, was marching with full expectation to inflict complete vengeance on the Athenians.

Xerxes in-
vades At-
tica, The united army arrived in the Attic territory three months after their passage over the Hellespont. They laid waste the country, burned the cities, and levelled the temples with the ground. At length they took possession of the capital; but the inhabitants, by a retreat no less prudent than magnanimous, had withdrawn from the fury of their resentment.

which the
Athenians
had evacu-
ated, It was impossible for the Athenians at once to oppose the Persian army, which marched from Bœotia, and to defend the western coast of Greece against the ravages of a numerous fleet. The inhabitants of Peloponnesus, despairing of being able to resist the enemy in the open field, had begun to build a wall across the isthmus of Corinth, as their only security on the side of the land against the Barbaric invasion. Under these circumstances the Athenians, by the advice of Themistocles, embraced a resolution which eclipsed the glory of all their former exploits. They abandoned to the Persian rage their villages, their territory, their walls, their city itself, with the revered tombs of their ancestors; their wives, and children, and aged parents were transported to the isles of Salamis and Ægina, and to the generous city of Trœzené, on the Argolic coast, which, notwithstanding the defection of Argos, the capital of that province, steadfastly adhered to the maxims of patriotism, and the duties of friendship. The embarkation was made with such haste, that the inhabitants were obliged to leave behind them their household furniture, their statues and pictures, and in general the most valuable part of their property. But they were willing to relinquish all for the sake of their country, which they well knew consisted not in houses, lands, and effects,* but in that equal constitution of government, which

* Ου λῆθαι, πῶς ξύλα οὐδε

Τεχνη τεκτονῶν αἱ πόλεις εἶναι,

they had received from their ancestors, and which it was their duty to transmit unimpaired to posterity. This constitution it was impossible for them to defend, unless they determined, at the risk of their lives, and of every thing dear to them, to maintain the general independence of the Grecian confederacy; the interest of which became doubly precious, by being thus inseparably connected with their own.

The Athenians capable of bearing arms or of handling an oar, embarked on board the fleet stationed at Salamis. The ships equipped and manned by them alone, exceeded in number those of all their allies together, although the combined force was considerably augmented by the naval strength of Epirus and Acarnania, which formerly doubtful and irresolute, had been determined to the side of Greece by the fortunate issue of the engagements at Artemisium. The whole Grecian armament, thus increased, amounted to three hundred and eighty vessels. That of the Persians, which now took possession of the Athenian harbours lying to the south of the strait occupied by the Greeks, had also received a powerful reinforcement. The Locrians, Bœotians, and in general every people who had submitted to their arms, readily supplying them with ships; and several of the Ægean islands having at length prepared the contingents which they had respectively been commanded to furnish. We are not exactly informed of the number or strength of the additional squadron: but it was supposed fully to compensate the loss occasioned by storms and sea-fights, and to restore the Persian fleet to its original complement of twelve hundred sail.*

Trusting to the immense superiority of his armament, Xerxes was still desirous to make trial of mines to

Αλλ' ὅπου ποτ' ἀνῶσω ΑΝΔΡΕΣ

Αὐτοὺς ὥξω εἰδοτές,

Ἐνταῦθα τεῖχη καὶ πόλεις.

Alcæus, apud Aristid.

* Herodot. Diodor. ubi supra; & Plut. in Themistocle.

fight again at sea. his fortune at sea, notwithstanding his former disasters on that element. But, before he came to a final resolution, he summoned a council of war, in order to hear the opinion of his maritime subjects or allies. The tributary kings of Tyre and Sidon, the leaders of the Egyptians, Cyprians, and Cilicians, ever ready to flatter the passions of their sovereign, offered many frivolous reasons in favour of the alternative to which they perceived him inclined. But in the fleet of Xerxes there was a Grecian queen named Artemisia, widow of the prince of Halicarnassus, and who had assumed the government of that city and territory for the benefit of her infant son. Compelled by the order of Xerxes, or perhaps irritated against the Athenians for some reasons which history does not record, she not only fitted out five ships to attend the Persian expedition, but took upon herself the command of her little squadron, and on every occasion conducted it with equal skill and bravery. Such vigour of mind, united with so delicate a form, deserved to excite admiration in every part of the world; but the manly spirit of Artemisia becomes still more admirable, when we consider the severe restraints which have been in all ages imposed on the female sex, by the manners and climate of Asia. Her superior genius recommended her to the peculiar favour of Xerxes, who was obliged to esteem in a woman the virtues which he himself wanted spirit to practise. Trusting to his advantageous opinion of her courage and fidelity, Artemisia dissented from the general voice of the allies, and even opposed the inclination of the prince. "Her former exploits on the coast of Eubœa afforded sufficient proof that her present advice was not the child of timidity. She had been ever forward to expose her person and her fame in the service of the Great King; but it was impossible to dissemble the manifest superiority of the Greeks in naval affairs. Yet, were the two armaments as much on a foot of equality in point of bravery and experience, as they were unequal in numbers, what motive could induce Xerxes to venture another

engagement at sea? Was he not already in possession of Athens, the great object of the war? The Spartans, who had opposed his progress at Thermopylæ, had reaped the just fruits of their temerity: those assembled at the Isthmus of Corinth might easily be involved in a similar fate. The Peloponnesus might then be laid waste by fire and sword, which would complete the destruction of Greece. Instead of proceeding immediately to that peninsula, should Xerxes choose to continue only a few weeks in the Attic territory, four hundred Grecian ships could not long be supplied with provisions from the barren rocks of Salamis. Necessity must compel them to surrender, or drive them to their respective cities, where they would become an easy prey to the Persian arms." These judicious observations were heard without approbation; the worst opinion prevailed, being the best adapted to flatter the vanity of Xerxes.

When the Grecian commanders observed that the enemy prepared to venture another engagement at sea, they likewise assembled to deliberate whether they should continue in the strait between Salamis and Attica, or proceed further up the gulf, towards the Corinthian isthmus. The latter proposal was generally approved by the confederates of Peloponnesus, who anxiously desired, in the present emergency, to approach as near as possible to their respective cities. Some hastened to their ships, and hoisted sail in order to depart; and it seemed likely that their example would be soon followed by the whole fleet. On board the ship of Themistocles was Mnesiphilus, formerly mentioned as the instructor of his youth, and who now accompanied him as his counsellor and friend. The experienced wisdom of Mnesiphilus readily discerned, that should the Greeks sail from Salamis, it would be impossible to prevent the general dispersion of their armament. He therefore exhorted Themistocles, to endeavour, by all possible means, to prevent this fatal measure; and particularly to persuade the Spartan admiral, Euribiades, to alter his present intention.

Deliberations of the Greeks,

guided by the abilities of Themistocles. Themistocles readily embraced the opinion of his friend. Having waited on Euribiades, he obtained his consent to summon a second assembly of the confederates. After they were fully convened, the Athenian began to call their attention to the state of their affairs; but his discourse was insolently interrupted by Adimantus, the commander of the Corinthians, who had constantly discovered a particular solicitude for returning to the isthmus. Themistocles, no less prudent than brave, answered his reproaches with calmness, and then addressing himself to Euribiades, "The fate of Greece," says he "depends on the decision of the present moment, and that decision on you; if you resolve to sail to the isthmus, we must abandon Salamis, Megara, and Ægina: we shall be compelled to fight in an open sea, where the enemy may fully avail themselves of their superior numbers: and, as the Persian army will certainly attend the motions of their fleet, we shall draw their combined strength towards the Grecian peninsula, our last and only retreat. But if you determine to retain the ships in their present station, the Persians will find it impossible, in a narrow channel, to attack us at once with their whole force; we shall preserve Megara and Salamis, and we shall effectually defend Peloponnesus; for the Barbarians being, as I firmly trust, defeated in a naval engagement, will not penetrate further than Attica, but return home with disgrace." He had scarcely ended his words, when Adimantus broke forth into new invectives, affecting surprise that Euribiades should listen to a man, who, since the taking of Athens, had not any city to defend: that the Athenians ought *then* to have a voice in the council when they could say they had a home. Themistocles replied, "that the Athenians had indeed undervalued their private estates and possessions, in comparison of their political independence and the general safety of Greece, and gloriously abandoned their *city* in defence of their *country*. But notwithstanding this sacrifice for the public good, they had still a home far more valuable than Corinth, two hundred ships of war well armed and manned, which no nation of Greece could resist.

That should the confederates persist in their present dangerous resolution, the Athenians would in these ships embark their wives and families; desert allies, which had first forsaken themselves; and repair to the coast of Italy, where it was foretold by ancient oracles, that Athens should, in some future time, form a great and flourishing settlement. That the Greeks would then remember and regret the advice of Themistocles, when, abandoned by the most considerable member of their league, they became an easy prey to the Barbarian invader." The firmness of this discourse shook the resolution of the confederates; and it was determined by the majority to remain at Salamis.

Between this important resolve and the engagement, there intervened a moment of the most anxious solicitude. The minds of men, impressed with an awful anticipation of the events about to be transacted, were thrown off their ordinary bias; and as the operations of nature, and the agency of invisible beings are always fondly connected in the imagination with the momentous concerns of human life, the Greeks felt, or believed they felt, extraordinary convulsions of the elements; they saw hideous spectres in the air; and heard, or fancied they heard, the most terrible and threatening voices.* But all these strange and supernatural appearances, which would otherwise have been doubtful or alarming, were proved, by a clear and explicit oracle, to foretell the destruction of the Barbarians.

Notwithstanding this favourable intimation of the divine will, which was carefully improved by the wisdom and eloquence of Themistocles, the Peloponnesians were ready to return to their first determination. A vessel arriving from the isthmus, brought advice that the fortifications there, were almost completed; if the fleet retired to the neighbouring shore, the sailors might, even after a defeat at sea, take refuge behind their walls; but if conquered near the coasts of Salamis, they would be for ever separated

* Lysias Fun. Orat. Herodot. *ibid.*

from their families and friends, and confined, without hope or resource, within the narrow limits of a barren island. In important alternatives, when the arguments on each side are almost equally persuasive, the party which we have embraced often appears the worst, merely because we have embraced it. Any new circumstance or consideration is always capable of changing the balance, and we hastily approve what we rejected after

much deliberation. Lest this propensity should, as prevented by a daring measure of Themistocles. there was much reason to fear, again disconcert his measures, Themistocles determined to prevent the

Greeks from the possibility of gratifying it. There commonly lived in his family a man named Sicinus, who at present accompanied him. He was originally a slave, and employed in the education of his children; but by the generosity of his patron, had acquired the rank of citizen, with considerable riches. The firmness and fidelity of this man rendered him a proper instrument for executing a stratagem, which concealed, under the mask of treachery, the enthusiasm of public virtue. Having received his instructions from Themistocles, he privately sailed to the Persian fleet, and obtaining admission into the presence of Xerxes, declared "That he had been sent by the captain of the Athenians, who could no longer endure the insolence of his countrymen, to acquaint the great king, that the Greeks, seized with consternation at the near approach of danger, had determined to make their escape under cover of the night; that now was the time for the Persians to achieve the most glorious of all their exploits, and by intercepting the flight of their enemies, accomplish their destruction at once."* The advice was believed; the whole day, and the greatest part of the succeeding night, the Persians employed in securing the several passages between the islands and the adjacent coast; and that nothing might be neglected that could contribute to their success, they filled the little isle, or rather rock, of Psyttalea, lying between Salamis and the continent, with the flower of the Persian infantry, in

* Herodot. l. viii. c. lxxv.

order to intercept the miserable remnant of the Greeks, who, after their expected defeat, would fly thither for refuge.

The first intelligence of these operations was brought to the Grecian fleet by Aristides the Athenian, who seems not to have availed himself of the general act of indemnity to return from banishment, but who readily embraced every opportunity to serve his country. Having with difficulty escaped in a small vessel from the isle of Ægina, the generous patriot immediately communicated an account of what he had seen there to his rival and enemy, Themistocles, who, meeting his generosity with equal frankness, made him the confidant of his secret. Their interview was as memorable as the occasion; and, after a continued life of opposition and hatred, they now first agreed to suspend their private animosities, in order to promote the common interest of their country. As the Peloponnesian commanders were either wavering and irresolute, or had determined to set sail, Aristides was desired to inform them of the arrangement which he had seen; the consideration of his country however rendered his evidence suspected, and it was imagined that he meant to sacrifice the general interest of the confederates to the safety of the Athenian families in Salamis. But the arrival of a vessel belonging to the isle of Tenos confirmed the veracity of his report, and the Peloponnesians resolved to fight, because it was impossible to fly.*

Before the dawn of the day the Grecian ships were drawn up in order of battle; and the Persians who had been surprised at not finding them attempt to escape during night, were still more surprised when morning discovered their artful orderly arrangement. The Greeks began with the light their sacred hymns and pœans, which preceded their triumphal songs of war, accompanied by the animating sound of the trumpet. The shores of Attica re-echoed to the rocks of Salamis and Psyttalea. The Grecian acclamations filled the sky. Neither their appearance nor their

His inter-
view with
Aristides.

Sea-fight
off the isle
of Salamis.

* Herodot. l. viii. c. lxxix. & seq.

words betokened flight or fear, but rather determined intrepidity and invincible courage. Yet was their valour tempered with wisdom. Themistocles delayed the attack until the ordinary breeze should spring up, which was no less favourable to the experience of the Grecian mariners, than dangerous to the lofty unwieldiness of the Persian ships.* The signal was then given for the Athenian line to bear down against that of the Phœnicians, which rode on the west, off the coast of Eleusis; while the Peloponnesians advanced against the enemy's left wing stationed on the east, near the harbour of the Piræus. The Persians, confiding in their number, and secure of victory, did not decline the fight. A Phœnician galley, of uncommon size and strength, was distinguished in the front of their line by every circumstance of naval pomp. In the eagerness to engage, she far outstripped her companions; but her career was checked midway between the two fleets by an Athenian galley which had sailed forth to meet her. The first shock shattered her sculptured prow, the second buried her in the waves. The Athenians, encouraged by this auspicious prelude, proceeded with their whole force, animating each other to the combat by a martial song: "Advance, ye sons of Athens, save your country, defend your wives and children, deliver the temples of your gods, regain the sacred tombs of your renowned forefathers; *this day*, the common cause of Greece demands your valour." The battle was bloody and destructive, and disputed on the side of the Persians with more obstinate resistance than on any former occasion; for, from the Attic coast, seated on a lofty throne on the top of mount Ægialos, Xerxes observed the scene of action, and attentively remarked, with a view to reward and punish, the various behaviour of his subjects. The presence of their prince operated on their hopes, and still more powerfully on their fears. But neither the hope of acquiring the favour, nor the fear of incurring the displeasure of a despot, could furnish principles of action worthy of being compared with the patri-

* Herodot. l. viii. c. lxxix. & seq.

otism and love of liberty which actuated the Greeks. To the dignity of their motives, as much as to the superiority of their skill, the latter owed their unexampled success in this memorable engagement. The foremost ships of the Phœnicians were dispersed and sunk. Amidst the terror and confusion occasioned by their repulse, they ran foul of those which had been drawn up in two lines behind them. The Athenians skilfully encircled them around, compressed them into a narrower space, and increased their disorder; they were at length entangled in each other, deprived of all power of action, and, to use the humble, but expressive figure of an eye-witness, “caught and destroyed like fish in a net.”* Such was the fate of the right wing; while the Ionians, who, on the left, opposed the fleets of Peloponnesus and Ægina, furnished them with an opportunity to complete the victory. Many of the Asiatic Greeks, mindful of the advice given by Themistocles, abandoned the interest of the Great King, and openly declared for their countrymen; others declined the engagement; the remainder were sunk or put to flight. Among those which escaped was the ship of Queen Artemisia, who in the battle of Salamis displayed superior courage and conduct: she was closely pursued by an Athenian galley, commanded by Amenias, brother of the poet Æschylus. In this extremity, she employed a successful, but very unwarrantable stratagem. The nearest Persian vessel was commanded by Damasithymus, a tributary prince of Calynda in Lycia, a man with whom Artemisia was at variance. With great dexterity, she darted the beak of her galley against the Lycian vessel. Damasithymus was buried in the waves; and Amenias, deceived by this measure, equally artful and audacious, believed the vessel of Artemisia one of those which had deserted the Persian interest. The Phœnician and Ionian squadrons (for that of the Egyptians had been exceedingly weakened by the action on the coast of Eubœa) formed the main strength of the Persian armament; after these were defeated, the ships

* Æschylus Persæ.

at a distance ventured not to advance, but hastily changing sail, measured back their course to the Athenian and other neighbouring harbours. The victors disdaining to pursue them, dragged the most valuable part of the wreck to the coasts of Psyttalea and Salamis. The narrow seas were covered with the floating carcasses of the dead, among whom were few Greeks, as even those who lost their ships in the engagement, saved their lives by swimming, an art which they universally learned as a necessary branch of education, and with which the Barbarians were totally unacquainted.*

Xerxes had scarcely time to consider and deplore the destruction and disgrace of his fleet, when a new spectacle, not less mournful, offered itself to his sight. The flower of the Persian infantry had taken post, as we have already observed, on the rocky island of Psyttalea, in order to receive the shattered remains of the Grecian armament, which, after its expected defeat, would naturally take refuge on that barren coast. But equally fallacious and fatal was their conjecture concerning the event of the battle. The Greeks, disembarking from their ships, attacked, in the enthusiasm of victory, those astonished troops, who, unable to resist, and finding it impossible to fly, were cut down to a man. As Xerxes beheld this dreadful havoc, he started in wild agitation from his silver throne, rent his royal robes, and in the first moment of his returning tranquillity, commanded the main body of his forces, posted along the Athenian coast, to return to their respective camps.

From that moment he resolved to return with all possible expedition into Asia. Yet did his fears
 Xerxes de-termines to leave Greece. and his policy conceal, for a few days, the design not only from the Grecian but from the Persian generals. Mardonius alone was too well acquainted with the temper of his master, to believe that his concern for the safety

* Before this period, it was a law at Athens and other states, *τοὺς παῖδας διδάσκεισθαι πρῶτον νηῦν τε καὶ γράμματα*; that boys first learn reading and swimming. Sam. Petit. de Leg. Att. p. 11.

of his illustrious person would allow him to remain longer than necessary in a country which had been the scene of so many calamities. The artful courtier availed himself of the important secret, to divert the storm of royal resentment which threatened the principal author of this inglorious undertaking. In his first interview with Xerxes, he exhorted him "not to be too deeply affected by the defeat of his fleet: that he had come to fight against the Greeks, not with rafts of wood, but with soldiers and horses: that the valour of the Persians had opposed all resistance, and their invincible sovereign was now master of Athens, the main object of his ambition: that having accomplished the principal end of the enterprise, it was time for the Great King to return from the fatigues of war to the cares of government, for with three hundred thousand chosen men, he would undertake to prosecute his designs, and to complete his victory." Such is the language of adulation, too often held to princes. The other courtiers confirmed by their approbation, the advice of Mardonius; and the Persian monarch, while he obeyed the dictates of his own pusillanimity, seemed to leave Greece in reluctant compliance with the anxious solicitude of his subjects.

Mardonius
remains
there with
300,000
men.

The remains of the Persian fleet, frightened from the coasts of Greece, returned to the harbours of Asia Minor, and afterwards assembled and rendezvoused, during the ensuing winter, in the port of Cymé. The transports were ordered to the Hellespont, on the banks of which Xerxes arrived with his troops in forty-five days, after intolerable hardships and fatigue. Famine and pestilence filled up the measure of their calamities; and, excepting the three hundred thousand chosen men committed to Mardonius, a detachment of whom guarded the royal person to the coast, scarcely a remnant was left of so many millions.* The bridge ostentatiously erected on the Hellespont would have presented, had it remained entire, a mortifying monument of past great-

The miserable
retreat
of his army.

* Οὐδὲν μῆρος ὥς εἶπαι, says Herodotus, emphatically.

ness. But this magnificent fabric had been destroyed by a tempest: and such is the obscurity with which Xerxes returned from Greece, compared with the blaze of grandeur in which he marched thither, that it is uncertain whether he crossed the channel in a Phœnician ship of war, or only in a fishing boat.* Having returned to Sardes, he endeavoured to compensate for the disappointment of ambition by the gratification of sensuality, and buried himself in pleasures more infamous and degrading, and not less frightfully criminal, than all the disgrace which his pride had incurred, and all the calamities which his subjects had either inflicted or suffered.†

Measures
taken by
the Greeks
after their
victory.

When the Greeks had leisure to examine the extent and completeness of their success, they determined in the first emotions of triumph and resentment, to pursue the shattered remains of the enemy. That no Barbarian might escape, they purposed immediately to sail northward, and to destroy the Persian bridge across the Hellespont. This design was recommended, and chiefly supported by the Athenians, who having experienced the greatest share of the danger, felt most sensibly the joys of deliverance. But upon more mature deliberation, it occurred that the Persians were still sufficiently numerous to afford just grounds of terror. To their cowardice and inexperience, not to their want of strength, the Greeks owed all their advantages over them; but should the impossibility of retreat be added to their other calamities, they might derive courage from despair, and, by efforts hitherto unexerted repair the consequences of past errors. These considerations, first suggested, it is said, by Euribiades the Spartan, were adopted by Themistocles who convinced his countrymen that the jealousy of the Grecian gods, unwilling that one man should be lord of Europe and Asia, rather than their own prowess, had given them the victory over Xerxes; a prince of such folly and madness, that he had treated with equal irreverence things human and divine, destroyed the sacred temples, overthrown the venerable altars

* Confer. Herod. Justin. Corn. Nepos.

† Herod. & Diodor. *ibid.*

and images, and impiously insulted the gods of the Hellespont with stripes and fetters. That it was the duty of the Athenians, after having gloriously repelled the common enemy, to provide for the comfortable subsistence of their wives and families, to sow their lands, rebuild their houses, and thus to repair, by the most industrious activity, the dreadful ravages committed in their territories.*

Themistocles had no sooner persuaded the Athenians to embrace his opinion, than he secretly despatched his confidant Sicinus to acquaint the Great King with the danger which he had so nearly escaped, and to advise him to pursue his journey with all possible expedition. Xerxes readily believed a piece of information, which agreed with the suggestions of his own cowardice. The rapidity of his march conspired with other circumstances above mentioned in proving fatal to the lives of his followers; and the crafty Athenian, who well knowing the unstable affections of the multitude, wished to deserve the gratitude of a king, gained the double advantage of dispelling sooner than could otherwise have happened, that destructive cloud of Barbarians which hovered over his country, and of convincing their leader that he was in part indebted for his safety to that very man whose counsels, rather than the arms of Greece, had occasioned his irreparable disasters and most signal disgrace.

The victory at Salamis terminated the second act of the Persian expedition, which has, with much propriety, been compared to a tragedy. The Greeks soon understood, that, notwithstanding the return of Xerxes, three hundred thousand men, commanded by Mardonius, were cantoned for the winter in Thrace, Macedon, and Thessaly, with a design to take the field early in the Spring, and again to try the fortune of war. This intelligence deterred the Athenians from bringing home their wives and children, as they originally intended, from Trœzené, Salamis, and Ægina, because they had reason to dread that their country would experience new effects of Bar-

Bold stratagem of Themistocles.

* Herodot. l. viii. c. cviii. & seq.

barian resentment. It appears, however, that a few citizens, more sanguine in their hopes than the rest, returned to their ancient habitations; while the greater part continued on board the fleet, or went to reside with their friends in the Peloponnesus.

Employment of the Greeks during the winter. According to modern ideas, it would be natural to expect, that, under the apprehension of another formidable invasion, the Greeks should have employed the winter in raising contributions, levying

and disciplining troops, and concerting proper measures for the public defence. But such preparations were in some degree unnecessary, because in the Grecian republics almost every citizen was a soldier; and the different states were at all times too weakly united, to agree in any uniform plan of operations. Besides, the customs and prejudices of that early age obliged them to observe many forms and ceremonies, which interfered with employments seemingly more useful, on such an important emergency. We find, accordingly, that instead of increasing or improving their military establishment, the Greeks spent the winter* in dividing the *spoil*; assigning to the different commanders the prizes of conduct and valour; performing the last offices to the dead; celebrating their games and festivals; and displaying, both in the multitude of their prayers, and in the magnificence of their offerings, the warmest gratitude to their protecting divinities. The dedications to the gods were intrinsically valuable. The rewards, bestowed on their generals were simple tokens of public esteem. The first consisted in vases, statues, and other ornaments of gold and silver; the second in a wreath of pine, laurel, or olive; a circumstance which made Tigranes the Persian exclaim, "Heavens! against what men have we come to contend? insensible to interest, they fight only for glory!"

Of the Athenians and Themistocles.

It is not surprising that the institutions of Greece should have deceived an untutored Barbarian, when we consider that even the modern philosopher and

* Herodot. l. viii. c. xxi. and seq.

historian have been too often dazzled by their splendour. Yet notwithstanding what Tigranes believed, and what, from the fond admiration of antiquity, many modern writers have asserted, the indiscriminate praise of disinterestedness by no means belonged to the Grecians. When the commanders of their several ships and squadrons assembled to regulate the distribution of naval and military rewards, each captain, with a selfishness equally indelicate and unjust, arrogated to himself the first prize of merit; though most of them acknowledged the desert of Themistocles as second to their own.* This general assignment of the second, while all alike assumed the first place, was equivalent to a public declaration in favour of the Athenian: and the honours which were conferred on him, both in his own country and in Sparta, sufficiently confirmed the decision. The usual marks of the public esteem were not indeed attended with any immediate profit, but their consequences were extremely beneficial. Supported by the favourable opinion of his countrymen, a commander by sea or land frequently attained an authority, the exercise of which was equally adapted to flatter pride and to gratify avarice. The behaviour of Themistocles, after he had acquired sufficient merit with the public to justify his rapacity, affords one memorable example of this kind; and, we shall meet with many more, in examining the subsequent events of the Grecian history. Instead of remaining at home, in order to concert a plan for repelling the danger which threatened his country, the Athenian commander sailed with a little squadron to the Cyclades, laid these unfortunate islands under a heavy contribution, and without the participation, or even knowledge of his colleagues in command, enriched himself and his favourites.†

On the approach of Spring, Mardonius prepared to take the field. His army consisted of the Medes, Persians, Scythians, and Indians; and though reduced from the millions which followed Xerxes to

Mardonius prepares to open the campaign.

* Herodot. l. viii. c. xxiii.

† Herodot. l. viii. c. lxxv.

about three hundred thousand men, it was thereby rather delivered from an useless incumbrance, than deprived of any real strength. Before marching from Thessaly, his superstition engaged him to consult the Grecian oracles, and moved probably by an erroneous explanation of their ambiguous responses, he determined to try the effect of negotiation, before he had recourse to arms. He might treat either with individuals, or with communities. By the former method, the Thebans assured him, that he might become master of Greece, without hazarding a battle. "You have only," said they, "to send money to the leading men in the several republics. In this manner you will divide each state into factions; engage them in a civil war; and, when exhausted by mutual hostilities, they will readily submit to your demands. Mardonius,

Endeavours
to detach
the Athe-
nians from
their allies; instead of pursuing this judicious system, which would probably have been successful, sent Alexander, king of Macedon, to treat with such Athenians as had returned to their city. This illustrious ambassador, who boasted an Argive extraction, was the tributary prince of a barbarous country; but of a country, destined, in a future age, to attain empire and renown, by the arts of Philip and the arms of his immortal son. The first Alexander was peculiarly well qualified for executing the office with which Mardonius had intrusted him, because his family had long been connected with the republic of Athens, by the sacred ties of hospitality. But his commission was as unwelcome as his visit was acceptable. The Athenians therefore, delayed calling an assembly to hear and answer his discourse, until the Spartans (who were apprised of the intention of Mardonius) should send ambassadors to assist at the deliberation. When all parties were convened, Alexander declared, "That he was sent to the Athenians on the part of Mardonius, who had received a message from the Great King, intimating his will to forgive their past injuries, to reinstate them in their possessions, to rebuild their houses and temples, and to receive them into the number of his friends and confederates." Mardonius then spoke for himself: "What madness, O Athenians,

can impel you to maintain war against a monarch, whom you cannot expect *ever* to conquer, nor hope *always* to resist? You are acquainted with the number and prowess of the troops under my command, which, formidable as they are, make but a small part of the unbounded resources of Xerxes. Every year he can invade you with an increasing superiority of strength; submit, therefore, to a power which it is vain to oppose; profit, ere it be too late, of the disposition of the Great King, and accept the offer of an alliance which folly alone, not fortitude and firmness, can engage you to decline." Alexander endeavoured to add weight to these considerations, by observing, "That his past conduct had uniformly proved the sincerity of his attachment to the Athenians; and that he was firmly convinced of the expediency, and even necessity of the measures now in agitation, otherwise he should not have undertaken to propose them. He therefore exhorted them to reflect on the advantages which would accrue to them from being alone, of all the Greeks, admitted into the alliance of Xerxes; to reflect also on the dreadful consequences which would attend their refusal, since their country, placed as a prize between the contending parties, would thereby be exposed to inevitable destruction."*

As soon as Alexander had ended his discourse, but without the Lacedæmonian ambassadors represented to the ^{success.} assembly, "That they had been sent on the part of their republic, to thwart the measures of the Barbarians, with whom, in order to resent the quarrel of her Athenian allies, Sparta had engaged in a bloody and destructive war. Could the Athenians then, for whose sake alone the war, which now extended over all Greece, was originally undertaken, abandon their friends and confederates, whose services they had every reason to approve? Could they associate with Barbarians, whose hostilities they had every reason to resent? Sparta affectionately sympathized with their sufferings in the loss of their houses and their harvests; yet the confederates in gene-

* Herodot. l. viii. c. cxi.

ral had endeavoured to prevent or repair the unhappy consequences of their loss: they had maintained their wives and families, supported and educated their helpless children, cherished and sustained the declining years of their parents. Their generosity was not yet exhausted; if the Athenians should be compelled again to abandon their country, they would again find the same hospitable reception in Peloponnesus; and their families, if it became necessary, would be maintained at the common expense, during the continuance of the war. Let them not, therefore be deceived by the specious words of the tyrant Alexander, who at the expense of truth, endeavoured to promote the interest of a tyrant like himself. The Athenians ought to remember, that neither justice, nor honour, nor fidelity, can be expected from tyrants and Barbarians.* Having thus spoken, the Lacedæmonians, as well as Alexander, withdrew; and the Athenians, after a short deliberation, answered both parties by the voice of Aristides, who as archon, or chief magistrate, presided in the assembly: first to the Macedonian, they replied, "That as they were sufficiently acquainted with the strength of Xerxes, he might have spared them the insult of describing its vast superiority to their own. Yet, in defence of liberty, there was no power too great to oppose. Return then, and tell Mardonius, that the Athenians will never make peace with Xerxes, while the sun performs his annual course in the heavens; but that, trusting to the assistance of the Gods and Heroes, whose temples and images the tyrant has impiously destroyed, we will resist him to the last extremity. To conclude: come not a second time to Athens with such insolent messages, indignation at which may make us forget that you are our friend, and connected with us by the sacred ties of reciprocal hospitality." The answer given to the Lacedæmonian ambassadors was delivered in a still higher strain of patriotism: "That the Barbarians, or even the peasants of Laconia, should suppose us capable of coming to an accommodation with the Persians,

* Herodot. l. viii. c. cxlii.

does not surprise us; but it is indeed surprising that you, citizens of Sparta, should entertain the same groundless fears; you, who have so often heard by report, and who, on so many occasions, have yourselves witnessed, the disinterested magnanimity of our republic. Know then, that the richest possessions on earth, that all the treasures of the Great King, are not sufficient to seduce our unalterable attachment to Greece. The laws of God and man equally forbid our ingratitude; or if all ties of *duty* were dissolved, our *resentment* against the Persians would restrain us. We must avenge our plundered altars, our prostrate images, our desolated temples. We must avenge the cause of our allies, and our own; for all the Greeks have the same religion, language, lineage, and manners; and, while an Athenian survives, will never, with his consent, make peace with the Barbarians. We acknowledge with gratitude your proffered kindness to our families; but henceforth we hope to provide for them, without giving the confederates any trouble on their account. What we request of you is, that your army march with all possible expedition towards Bœotia, that our united resistance may stop the progress of the Barbarian, who, as soon as he is apprised of our determined hostility, will not fail to proceed southward, to invade Attica a second time.”*

This conjecture was justified by the event. The Persians within a few weeks marched into Bœotia, but the Athenians looked in vain for the expected arrival of their Spartan auxiliaries. To have witnessed the proceedings just described in the Athenian assembly, we should have imagined that there was a generous contest of patriotism between the two republics; and that the happiness and glory of Greece, not the interest of their particular communities, was the great object of their ambition. But the Greeks had often much patriotism in their speeches, when there was little in their hearts; and the Spartans, who had lately employed such powerful arguments to engage Athens in defence

The Peloponnesians desert the common cause.

* Herodot. l. viii. c. cxl. & seq.

of the common cause, totally abandoned their principles whenever it suited their conveniency.* Instead of issuing forth in order to support their allies in Bœotia, they remained within the isthmus, and endeavoured to fortify that inlet into their territory with such additional walls and bulwarks as might render it impenetrable. The work was now complete; and the Peloponnesians, secure, as they imagined, behind this solid rampart, equally disregarded the safety, and despised the resentment of their northern allies.

Magnanimity of the Athenians. The Athenians, a second time forsaken by their confederates, were obliged again to desert their country. They had scarcely sailed to their families in Salamis, when Attica was invaded by the Persians. While the fugitives continued in that island, they received another embassy from Mardonius, offering them the same terms which they had formerly rejected. They still persisted in rejecting them; in consequence of which, they beheld, without apparent uneasiness, from the shores of Salamis, their territories again laid waste; their cities, and villas, and temples, devoured by the flames; and every thing that had escaped the fury of the first invasion, destroyed or consumed by the second.

After committing these ravages, which, as he had already obtained complete possession of the country, deserved to be considered only as the effect of a childish resentment, Mardonius returned into Bœotia, that his troops might be supplied with provisions, and that, should the enemy offer them battle, they might engage in a country better adapted than Attica to the operations of cavalry. The Athenians, who had been sent from Salamis to remonstrate with the Spartan council against

the delays or desertion of the Peloponnesians, were accompanied by ambassadors from Platea and Megara, who confirmed their arguments and complaints. With the indignation of disappointed confidence, they upbraided the indifference and lukewarmness of the Spartans in the common cause; sentiments which ill

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† Herodot. l. ix. c. i. & seq.

corresponded with their own generous ardour. They contrasted the base treachery of Sparta, formerly the honour, now the disgrace of Greece, with the patriotic magnanimity of Athens. The latter, they observed, compelled by necessity, or urged by resentment of the shameful dereliction on the part of her allies, would doubtless accept the terms offered by Mardonius, and then the Peloponnesians must become sensible, when it was too late, that the wall across the isthmus formed but a partial and feeble defence; and however it might secure them from inroads on the side of the land, would ill protect their coasts against the descents of the Persian, reinforced by the Athenian fleet.*

Whether the eloquence of the ambassadors, or the ^{Persuade} returning sense of public utility, overcame the ^{them to} pusillanimous resolutions formerly embraced by the ^{take take} Spartans, it is certain that they now first determined to take the field. Five thousand Spartan pike-men were accompanied by thirty-five thousand Helots. Their Peloponnesian allies sent their respective contingents; so that the heavy-armed men raised in the peninsula exceeded twenty thousand, commanded by Pausanias, the guardian and kinsman of Plistarchus, son of Leonidas. Having marched beyond the isthmus, they were joined by Aristides, at the head of eight thousand Athenians, and by a superior number of their allies of Megara. Thespiæ, Platea, Salamis, Eubœa, and Ægina. The whole heavy-armed troops amounted to nearly forty thousand; the light-armed were the thirty-five thousand Helots, attendants on the Spartans, and about as many more, one to each soldier, attending the other divisions of the army.†

Mardonius having marched into Bœotia, encamped on the banks of the Æsopus. His army of three hundred thousand men, while they waited the enemy's approach, of which they were secretly informed by the Argives, were employed in building a square fortification, about five quarters of a mile

Mardonius encamps on the Æsopus in Bœotia; and the Greeks on the opposite bank.

* Lysias, Orat. Funeb.

† Herodot. l. ix. c. i. & seq. Diodor. Sicul. l. xi. & Plut. in Aristid.

in front; a work of little utility, since it could only defend a small portion of a camp which extended many miles, from the Theban town of Erythræ, to the territory of the Plateans. The Greeks having arrived in those parts, took post at the foot of mount Citheron, directly opposite to the enemy.

Incidents preceding the battle of Plataea. The hostile armies remained eleven days in their encampments, during which several incidents happened, which tend to display the manners and character of those great bodies of men, who were

soon to attempt the destruction of each other. Of the Grecians inhabiting the countries north of Attica, the Phocians, as we have already had occasion to observe, were the least disposed to embrace the cause of Mardonius. Yet, as all their neighbours had submitted to his arms, they reluctantly sent to his camp a thousand soldiers, well armed, and commanded by Harmocydes, a citizen of great influence and authority. They had not continued many days in the Persian army, when an order came from Mardonius (the reason was unknown,) for the Phocians to be detached from the rest, and encamped in a separate body on the plain. They had no sooner obeyed his command, than the whole Persian cavalry appeared in sight, and soon formed themselves in hostile array. It immediately occurred to the Phocians, and particularly to their prudent commander, that Mardonius, suspecting their fidelity, or yielding to the solicitations of their inveterate enemies, the Thessalians, had resolved on their destruction. Harmocydes, therefore, pointing to the cavalry, called to his companions, "You see those men, who come with an evident intention to destroy us; but let us die like Grecians, and exert ourselves with all the fury of a desperate defence, rather than tamely submit to a dishonourable fate." While he yet spoke, the Phocians seized their arms, arranged themselves in order of battle, and supporting each other in redoubled ranks, presented on every side a firm circle of protended lances. Their warlike appearance struck terror into the surrounding cloud of Barbarians, who advanced brandishing, and a few of the nearest throwing, their javelins: but further they ventured not to pro-

ceed; the determined countenance of the Greeks sufficed to repel them; they retired in haste to the Persian camp. A herald was then sent by Mardonius, "desiring the Phocians to take courage, nor to dread farther hostilities; that they had shown themselves to be brave men, contrary to the account which he had received of them; and if they displayed their valour in the Persian cause, they should find it impossible to conquer either Xerxes or himself in good offices."*

The above relation tends to prove, that none of the Greeks, not even those who joined the enemy, were deficient in courage. Another incident related by the same historian proves, that notwithstanding the extreme folly of their commanders the Persians were not universally deficient in wisdom. While they were encamped on the *Æsopus*, a wealthy Theban, named *Attiginus*, invited Mardonius, with fifty of his most distinguished officers, to a magnificent entertainment. The feast was given at Thebes, and an equal number of *Bœotians* were called to it. Among these was *Thersander*, a native of *Orchomenus*, and a person of the highest distinction in that city. Two of the guests were placed on each couch; and, as *Thersander* himself related to *Herodotus*, his Persian companion, after supper, entering into conversation in the Greek tongue, testified, under the seal of secrecy, his gloomy apprehensions concerning the event of the present war. He did not even hesitate to declare his firm persuasion, that few Persians would survive an engagement. When asked by the Theban, why he did not communicate this opinion to his general; he said, that men of plain sense and honesty had seldom much influence with the great. It appeared from the whole tenor of his discourse, that there were many in the Persian army, who, like himself, lamented the mad ambition of Xerxes, and the fatal rashness of Mardonius; and who, while they respected their stations and dreaded their power, despised their characters and condemned their conduct.† This observation it is proper to make for the honour of human nature. In absolute govern-

* *Herodot. l. ix. c. i. & seq.*

† *Herodot. l. ix. c. xv.*

ments, it is said that men obey, like a flock of sheep, the voice of a despot; yet it may be said with equal truth, that amidst the obedience extorted by fear, they often see and regret the folly of their shepherd.

Skirmishes between the Greeks and the Persian cavalry. In such nigh neighbourhood, it was scarcely to be expected that the hostile camps should remain without frequent skirmishes. These preludes to the general engagement ended favourably for the Grecians. Three thousand soldiers, furnished by

the rocky district of Megara, were posted on the side most exposed to the enemy's cavalry, by whose incursions they had been so much harassed, that they determined to abandon that difficult station. Before executing this design, they sent a herald to the Grecian generals, intimating their resolution, embraced from necessity, and at the same time hinting the injustice of detaining them, from the time of their first encampment, in a post of peculiar danger, which, though they had hitherto indeed maintained it with singular constancy and fortitude, they now found themselves unable longer to defend. Pausanias addressed himself successively to the whole army, to know whether any division was willing to change posts with the Megarians. All were silent, or declined the proposal on frivolous pretences. The Athenians alone, actuated by that love of pre-eminence which they did not more ardently desire than they justly deserved, voluntarily offered their services on this trying occasion. They had not long occupied the important post, when the enemy's cavalry began to assault them. The assault they repelled with vigour, and Masistius the Persian general, fell in the action. A terrible conflict ensued, according to ancient custom, around the body of the dead general. The Athenians at length gained possession of it, though they began to give way before more impetuous attacks of the horse, yet upon being supported by a reinforcement from the main body, they again recovered their ground, and compelled the Persians to retire. When messengers arrived in the camp with an account of this defeat, and the death of their commander, Mardonius and his attendants burst into tears;

their lamentations were soon communicated to the troops, and diffused over the army, whose plaintive cries filled the whole land of Bœotia. The Persians tore their hair, disfigured their faces, and displayed every symptom of intolerable woe; for they had lost Masistius who in comeliness and stature was the first of their generals, and in military courage and address only second to Mardonius.*

The Grecians having thus bravely delivered themselves from the incursion of the Persian cavalry, were now exposed to a still greater inconvenience, the scarcity of fresh water, which soon obliged them to decamp. Their late success afforded a favourable moment for executing this dangerous measure. They proceeded in arms along the foot of mount Citheron, ready to repel the attack of the enemy, by converting the column of march into an order of battle. They arrived without opposition at the place appointed. This was a plain near the village of Hysia, in the territory or Platæa, interspersed with many gentle eminences, adorned with a grove and temple sacred to the genius of the place, and enriched by the copious fountain Gargaphia; a necessary resource to the Greeks, as the enemy, by means of their cavalry and archers, commanded both sides of the Æsopus.

The Greeks move to Hysia, in the territory of Platæa.

It might be expected, that men prepared to defend every thing most dear to them, should have preserved in the field perfect agreement and unanimity: especially as the Greeks, on some occasions at least, seemed sensible that such concord was necessary for the general safety. When the allies on both sides the isthmus had assembled in Attica, they vowed with common consent to the gods, and bound themselves by the most tremendous oaths; to maintain with steadfast adherence an unshaken fidelity to Greece, to prefer liberty to life, to obey the command of their leaders, and to bury their companions slain in battle. Should

Dissensions in the allied army,

* Herodot. l. ix. c. ccxxiv.

fortune render them victorious (which to their present ardour seemed scarcely a matter of doubt,) they swore never to demolish any city whose inhabitants had concurred with the general voice on this important occasion, and never to rebuild the temples defaced by the Barbarians, but to leave them to the most distant posterity, as a monument of sacrilegious rage, and an incitement to honourable revenge. They swore also to institute an annual festival, denominated "Common Liberty,"* and to consecrate public games and sacrifices to the goddess, the great author of their union, and the venerable object of their worship. But these public-spirited sentiments continued not long to actuate them. We have already had occasion to remark several symptoms of approaching animosity. Their dissensions soon broke out into an open rupture, and prevailed, even on the eve of a battle, not only between rival republics, but in the bosom of almost every community.

The first contest arose between the Athenians and Tegeans, about the command of the left wing. Both parties yielded the right, as the place of greatest honour, to the Spartans. But the citizens of Tegea, in number three thousand, had been long deemed the best soldiers in Arcadia; and, in all the conjunct expeditions of the Peloponnesians, they had always obtained, unrivalled, the second honours of the field. These they professed themselves unwilling to relinquish, alleging the heroic exploits of their ancient kings; and asserting, "That the actions of the Athenians, performed either during their royal or democratical government, could not bear a comparison with their own: they appealed on this subject to the Lacedæmonians, in conjunction with whom they had often fought and conquered, and whose decision in their favour they rather claimed than requested." This bold pretension the Athenians repelled, with as much dignity as eloquence. "We know," said they, "that the Greeks are here assembled, not to dispute about precedence, but to fight the Barbarian. Yet, as the Tegeans have men-

* Herodot. l. ix. c. viii. & seq.

tioned *their* ancestors, it becomes us to maintain the immortal renown of our own. Need we mention their ancient victories over the impious Thebans; their chastisement of the insolent Eurystheus; their generous protection of the unfortunate sons of Hercules? When Greece was invaded by the warlike Amazons, and afterwards by the fiercer savages of Scythia and Thrace, the Athenians resisted and overcame the common enemy. What people fought with more bravery than they in the war of Troy. But perhaps *we*, who now address you, have degenerated from the glory of our ancestors. Let the battle of Marathon efface the foul suspicion. There, unaided and alone, we defended the general safety, maintained the glory of Greece, and raised by the prowess of our single republic, a trophy over forty nations. This exploit, had we no other to allege, entitles us to the rank claimed by the Tegeans, and to far greater honours. But the present is not a time for such contests; place us therefore, O Spartans! in whatever station you think fit; there we will behave like brave men." Their words were scarcely ended, when the whole army of the Lacedæmonians cried out with one consent, "That the Athenians were far more worthy than the Tegeans or any nation of Arcadia, to stand at the head of the left wing;" and accordingly they assumed that important post.*

Meantime the Barbarian army approached. The Medes and Persians encamped on the plain, fronting the Spartans: the Grecian auxiliaries were placed in direct opposition to the Athenians. It is easy to perceive, even at this distance of time, the reason for such an arrangement. The Persians avoided to encounter the Athenian bravery, which they had already fatally experienced in the field of Marathon; and, as the Thebans were the most powerful and the warmest of their foreign allies, as well as the inveterate enemies to Athens, it was thought proper to oppose them to that side on which the Athenians were posted. Ambiguous oracles, attended by unfavourable omens and pro-

The Persians encamped near the enemy.

* Herodot. l. ix. c. xxvi. & seq. Plut. in Aristid.

pecies, had hitherto deterred Mardonius from venturing a general engagement; and he was at length determined to this measure, not from any auspicious* change in the admonitions of heaven, but from the apparent timidity occasioned by the real dissensions of the Greeks.

The Greeks

decamp a
second
time.

The same reasons which made Mardonius desire to preserve, made Pausanias wish to alter, the relative disposition of their respective camps. Except in the glorious contest at Thermopylæ, in which they devoted themselves to death for the safety of their country, the Spartans had never contended with the Medes; but they had often fought and conquered the Bœotians. Pausanias therefore desired (for though dignified with the title of General, he could not command) the Athenians to change places with his countrymen. This request was cheerfully complied with; but other circumstances sowed dissension in the Athenian camp.† The quiet likewise of the Lacedæmonians was disturbed by the quarrels between Pausanias and Anompharetus, the Spartan next in command; and, conspiring with these internal animosities, the Persian horse beat up their quarters, intercepted their convoys, and, by an unexpected incursion, destroyed their watering-place. It thus became necessary again to decamp. The obscurity of midnight was chosen as the most convenient time for effecting this purpose; and the destined place of retreat was a narrow slip of ground lying towards the source of the Æsopus, and confined between that river and mount Citheron. This post was at least preferred by the majority; for the Greeks were by no means unanimous; so that when the march was ordered, many of the allies abandoned their leaders; others took refuge in the neighbouring

* The prophets consulted were Greeks, who perhaps secretly served the cause of their country. Mardonius resolved to engage the enemy, as we learn from Herodotus, without regarding their predictions. Alexander of Macedon came in the night to the Grecian camp, to give intimation of that resolution; yet Mardonius seems to have been immediately determined to attack, by the circumstances mentioned in the text.

† Plutarch in Aristid.

temples, to elude the pursuit of the horse; while Anompharetus the Spartan declared, "That neither he, nor the division under his command, should ever fly from the enemy:" and in consequence of its dispersion in so many different directions, the Grecian army presented next morning the appearance, not of a regular march, but of a flight or rout.

Mardonius was apprised that the Greeks had changed their order of battle. He was now informed, that they had abandoned their camp. Not doubting that fear had precipitated their retreat, he ordered his soldiers to pursue the fugitives, and to complete the victory. The Lacedæmonians and Athenians were still within his reach; the former near the foot of the mountain, the latter in the middle of the plain. Having sent his Grecian auxiliaries, amounting to fifty thousand, against the Athenians, he advanced with the bravest of the Persian troops towards that portion of the enemy which had shown an anxious solicitude to avoid his arms. Never did the contrast appear greater than in the opposite appearance and behaviour of the warring nations on this occasion. The Barbarians, ill armed, and totally ignorant of discipline, advanced without order, and with a loud insulting noise. The Lacedæmonians, carefully covered with their shields, observed in silence the result of their sacrifices. While the heavenly admonitions were unfavourable, they patiently received the darts and javelins which the enemy threw upon them. But as soon as Pausanias, casting his eyes towards a neighbouring temple of Juno, and devoutly entreating the protection of the goddess, had obtained in the changing aspect of the victims, a propitious answer to his prayer, the Spartans proceeded with intrepidity to close with their opponents.* The Persians, reinforced with the Sacæ, a Scythian tribe, sustained the attack with great bravery. Immense numbers were slain; but new numbers succeeded, crowding together in tumultuous disorder, and making an hideous outcry, as if they had intended to tear in

Mardonius
attacks
them.

The battle
of Platæa.

* Herodot. l. ix. c. lxi. & seq.

pieces and to devour the enemy. Mardonius, mounted on a white steed of uncommon strength and swiftness, was distinguished in every part of the battle by the splendour of his appearance, but still more by deeds of signal valour. He was attended by a thousand horsemen, consisting of the flower of the Persian nobility, all alike ambitious to imitate the example, and to emulate the fame, of their leader. Had their skill been equal to their courage, or had they previously bestowed as much pains in disciplining their troops as in improving their own agility and address, either the Greeks must have been conquered, or the battle must have remained doubtful. But the Barbarians acted without union or concert; and, as they fought singly, were successively defeated. It is the nature and the greatest disadvantage of cavalry, not to increase in force in proportion to the reduplication of its ranks. The Grecian phalanx, on the other hand, received an accession of strength from every addition to its depth; the ranks behind supported those before; no power was mispent or unexerted: and the effect might be continually augmented, till it became irresistible. Availing themselves of this circumstance, the Lacedæmonians thickened their ranks, extended their spears, sustained the shock, and penetrated the depth, of the bravest

Death of
Mardonius,
and defeat
of the Bar-
barians.

Persian squadron. Mardonius fell by the fortunate arm of the Spartan Alcimnestus.* The death of the general was immediately followed by the defeat of the Persians, and the defeat of the Persians by the flight of the Barbarian army. Artabazus, the Parthian chief, had from the beginning condemned the rash measures of Mardonius. He commanded forty thousand men, who were prepared on every occasion to follow the example of their leader. As soon as he perceived the confusion of the Persians, he made the signal for his troops to quit the field.

* Composed of two Greek words, which may be translated "of immortal memory:" an instance, among many, that the Greeks frequently gave names characteristic of persons; a custom which likewise prevailed much among the Jews. See Michaelis' Translation and Annotations on Genesis, p. 37. & passim.

He conducted them through the territory of the Phocians, and by a hasty march to the Hellespont, anticipating the news of the defeat and death of Mardonius, returned in safety to the Asiatic coast, with the forces intrusted to his care.*

The remainder of the discomfited Barbarians sought refuge in their camp, which, as we have already mentioned, had been strengthened by a considerable fortification. The Spartans pursued them with great ardour, but were unable to force their encampment. The Tegeans and other troops seconded the attack, but no impression could be made on the wall, till the arrival of the Athenians. These generous defenders of the cause of liberty had repulsed the Grecian auxiliaries, who impiously assisted the enemies of their country. The behaviour of the greater part of the traitors furnished the occasion of an easy victory; for, unable to meet the just reproaches and indignant looks of their countrymen, they soon betook themselves to flight, which, in the present case, seemed more honourable than resistance. The Thebans alone opposed with great perseverance the Athenian valour; they did not desist from hostility till several hundreds were slain; and when compelled to quit the field, they fled towards Bœotia, and shut themselves up within the strong walls of their city. Instead of pursuing these fugitives, though their domestic and inveterate foes, the Athenians, with a laudable moderation and prudence, probably inspired by Aristides, then one of their generals, hastened to reinforce the Lacedæmonians, who had already engaged and put to flight the main strength of the enemy. The Athenians, however, came in time to complete the glory of that memorable day. They attacked with redoubled vigour the fortification, which had been in vain assaulted by their allies; and having effected a breach in the wall, entered the Persian camp. They were followed by the brave soldiers of Tegea, and afterwards by the Spartans. The Barbarians were seized with consternation at seeing so many myriads confined

Defeat of
their auxiliaries.

The Persians massa-

* Herodot. l ix. c. lxxv.

cred in their camp. within a narrow space. The means of their expected safety became the principal cause of their destruction. Fear hindered them to fight; the wall hindered them to fly; the great number of the enemy made it dangerous for the victors to give quarter; resentment of past injuries prompted them to revenge; of near two hundred thousand Barbarians, not two thousand escaped the fury of the Grecian spear.*

The valuable booty found there: how applied. The event of this bloody engagement not only delivered the Greeks from the danger of servitude, but gave them possession of greater wealth than they could ever have expected to possess. In his precipitate retreat from Greece, Xerxes left behind him all his riches and magnificence. His most valuable effects were bestowed on Mardonius, the flatterer of his inclinations, and the unfortunate minister of his revenge. The rest was divided among his inferior favourites; and, independently of the bounty of the prince, the tents of the Persian nobles furnished a wide profusion of elegance and splendour. Couches magnificently embroidered; tables of gold and silver; bowls and goblets of gold; stalls and mangers of brass, curiously wrought and ornamented; chains, bracelets, scimitars, some of solid gold, others adorned with precious stones; and to crown all, many chests of Persian money, which began at that time, and continued long afterwards to be current in Greece. In the common mass of spoil, Herodotus reckons a great many Persian women, besides innumerable horses and camels. The whole being collected into one place, the tenth was consecrated to the gods. A tenth of the remainder was bestowed on the general. Peculiar presents were offered to the temples of Olympian Jove, Isthmian Neptune, and Delphian Apollo, the favourite divinities of the whole Grecian name; nor did the Athenians forget to show particular gratitude to their adored Minerva. Prizes were afterwards distributed among the bravest of the surviving warriors; for, though the victory

* Herodot. l. ix. cap. c.

had been obtained with little blood, yet several hundreds had fallen, now lamented as the most generous and daring; among whom were ninety-one Spartans, fifty-two Athenians, and sixteen men of Tegea. Callicratides, a Spartan, the bravest and most beautiful of the Greeks, was slain by an arrow, before Pausanias, who had not yet finished the sacrifice, had given the signal of engagement. As he fell, he said to those around him, that he was contented to die for Greece, but regretted dying ingloriously, having performed nothing worthy of himself, or the common cause. But in the battle itself no combatant behaved with such distinguished bravery as Aristodemus, who alone, of three hundred Spartans, survived the action of Thermopylæ. This circumstance had rendered him contemptible in the eyes of his countrymen. He was continually upbraided with the base desertion of his companions. The most heroic deeds could not restore him to the good opinion of the public, and it was asserted by the Spartans, that even on the present occasion, as he had determined to seek a voluntary death in order to efface the stain of his former infamy, he was not entitled to any of those honours which are deservedly bestowed on the genuine efforts of spontaneous valour.*

The Greeks buried their dead with every circumstance of funeral pomp, erected in the field of battle conspicuous trophies of their renown, and appropriated the value of twenty thousand pounds for dedicating temples and statues to the tutelary deities of Plataea, the illustrious scene of victory. A few days were spent in these transactions; after which it was determined, by universal consent, to march into Bœotia, in order to chastise the perfidy of the Thebans. On the eleventh day after the battle they arrived in the neighbourhood of Thebes, ravaged the territory, and made approaches to the walls. The citizens, who were not all equally guilty or equally obnoxious, escaped general destruction by surrendering the leaders of

The confederate
Greeks
chastise the
perfidy of
the The-
bans.

* Herodot. l. ix. c. lxx.

the faction which abetted the interest of the Medes. The traitors were carried to Corinth, condemned without trial, and sacrificed to the manes of their countrymen who had fallen at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea, in defence of political liberty and national independence.*

Battle of
Mycalé in
Ionia.

The battle of Plataea happened on the twenty-second of September; and, on the same day, another battle, not less glorious or less decisive, was fought between the same nations at the promontory of Mycalé in Ionia, opposite to the isle of Samos. The shattered remnant of the Persian fleet, which had escaped destruction on the fatal twentieth of October of the preceding year, took refuge in the friendly ports of Asia Minor. The victorious armament had suffered too much in repeated shocks with a superior force, to engage at that late season in the pursuit of an enemy, whose strength, amounting to above four hundred vessels, was still nearly the double of their own. The little squadron of Themistocles, averse to inactivity, found occupation, as we already had occasion to notice, in laying the islands of the Ægean under contribution. The great body of the fleet rendezvoused in the harbours of Ægina. There the Grecians continued during the winter, and before the season for action approached, the command was bestowed on Xantippus the Athenian, and on Leotychides, the Spartan king. To these commanders, whose abilities and influence in their respective republics, we formerly had an opportunity to mention, there arrived early in the Spring a secret deputation from several cities of Ionia, entreating that the valour of the European Greeks, which had been so successfully employed in their own defence, might be still farther exerted in delivering from bondage their brethren in Asia. In consequence of this invitation, the fleet sailed eastward, and had scarcely reached the coast of Delos, when a second embassy came from the Samians, proposing the same measures as the first, and farther adding that the Persian fleet now lying in the harbour of Samos, might

* Herodot. l. ix. c. lxxxv.

be attacked and defeated without danger or difficulty. The Grecians seized with eagerness a favourable opportunity for terminating the war; but, before they arrived at Samos, the enemy suspecting their motions, and unwilling to hazard another engagement at sea, had retired to the Ionic coast, and, according to the custom of that age, not only drawn their ships on shore, but surrounded them with a ditch and pallisade, and even a stone wall of considerable strength. The vessels thus secured, the sailors, amounting to forty thousand, commanded by Artayndes, formed a camp along the shore. They were reinforced by the Persian army under Tigranes, computed at sixty thousand. It appears not whether this powerful body of men made any attempt to disturb the landing of the Greeks, who at the highest computation could not amount to a fourth part of their number. It seems most probable that they disdained this measure, and though they acknowledged their inferiority at sea, determined to hazard at land a general engagement, in which the isles and Hellespont, as well as the flourishing cities of the Asiatic coast, should form the important prize of victory.

The Greeks did not decline the battle. Xantippus The Greeks is said to have made use of a similar contrivance victorious. with that employed by Themistocles at Artemisium, for depriving the enemy of their Grecian auxiliaries.* A more probable stratagem is ascribed to Leotychides, who in order to encourage his troops, is said to have industriously spread a report that their countrymen had obtained a signal victory at Plataea. This report by whatever means† it was raised and circulated, had doubtless a considerable effect in deciding the fortune of the day. Other circumstances not less powerful, were the general revolt of the Asiatic Greeks, and the silent contest of

* The story is improbable, because the Asiatic Greeks had already declared their intention to revolt. It was not the interest of Xantippus, therefore, to make the Persians suspect their fidelity, since treacherous friends are always more dangerous than open enemies.

† Herodotus (l. ix. c. c.) and Diodorus (l. xi. c. xxxv.) differ in their accounts,

honour between the Spartans and Athenians. Among the Barbarian troops, the Persians behaved with uncommon bravery; and, on the side of the Grecians, the battle of Mycalé was more bloody than any other fought in the course of the war. It deserves attention, that in all these memorable actions, the Greeks had no resource but in victory. But the Barbarians had provided probable means of safety, even in case of a defeat. On the present occasion they had endeavoured not only to secure a retreat within a strongly fortified camp, but to acquire an undisturbed passage through the narrow defiles of Mycalé. Yet all their precautions were ineffectual against the valour and fortune of the Greeks. The Milesians, posted by the enemy to guard the passes of the mountains, prevented instead of promoting their escape. The Spartans pursued them with great slaughter in that direction; while the Athenians, assisted by the allies of Corinth, Sicyon, and Træzené, advanced with undaunted bravery to attack their camp. The Asiatic Greeks, who at all times acknowledged the warlike pre-eminence of their European brethren, emulated, in the present engagement alone, in which they fought for every thing dear to them, the admired valour of their ancestors. Above forty thousand Persians perished in the field; many fell in the pursuit, or in defending their entrenchments: the remainder fled in disorder, nor thought themselves secure till they had reached the walls of Sardes. Their ships, their camp, the freedom of Ionia, and the undisturbed possession of the Asiatic coast, formed the inestimable prize of the victors; and thus the expedition of Xerxes, undertaken with a view to enslave Europe, restored liberty to the fairest portion of Asia.*

Conclusion
and conse-
quences of
the Persian
invasion.

* Herodot. l. ix. c. xc.—c. cxiv. Diodorus Siculus, l. xi. c. xxxiv.—c. xxxviii.





